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*The Use and Intent of PROPHECY,
in the several Ages of the World:*

I N S I X
DISCOURSES,
Delivered at the
TEMPLE CHURCH,
I N
APRIL and MAY, 1724.

*Published at the Desire of the MASTERS of the
BENCH of the Two Honourable SOCIETIES.*

To which are added,

Three DISSERTATIONS.

- I. *The Authority of the Second Epistle of St. PETER.*
 - II. *The Sense of the Antients before Christ, upon the
Circumstances and Consequences of the FALL.*
 - III. *The Blessing of JUDAH, Gen. xlix:*
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THE SECOND EDITION CORRECTED.

By THO. SHERLOCK, D.D. *Dean
of Chichester, and Master of the Temple.*

L O N D O N:

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Church in Fleet-Street. 1726.

To the WORSHIPFUL the

MASTERS of the BENCH

Of the TWO HONOURABLE

SOCIETIES of the TEMPLE,

THESE

DISCOURSES,

Published at their Desire,

Are INSCRIBED by

Their most obedient

humble Servant,

THO. SHERLOCK.



PREFACE *to the Reader.*



Have nothing more to say for the Publication of these Discourses, than what appears in the Title Page.

But, that the Reader may not be deceived, it is proper to tell him here, that he is not to expect in the following Discourses an Answer to a Book lately published, entitled, Grounds and Reasons, &c. — That Work was undertaken, and has been discharged to the Satisfaction of the Publick by a much abler Hand. When I entered upon the Design of forming these Discourses, it was with a View of shewing the Use and Intent of Prophecy, in the several Ages of the World, and the manifest Connexion between the Prophecies of every Age. They who consider the Prophecies under the old Testament, as so many Predictions only, independent of each other, can never form a right Judgment of the Argument, for the Truth of Christianity, drawn from this Topick; nor be able to satisfy themselves, when they are confronted with the Ob-

PREFACE to the Reader.

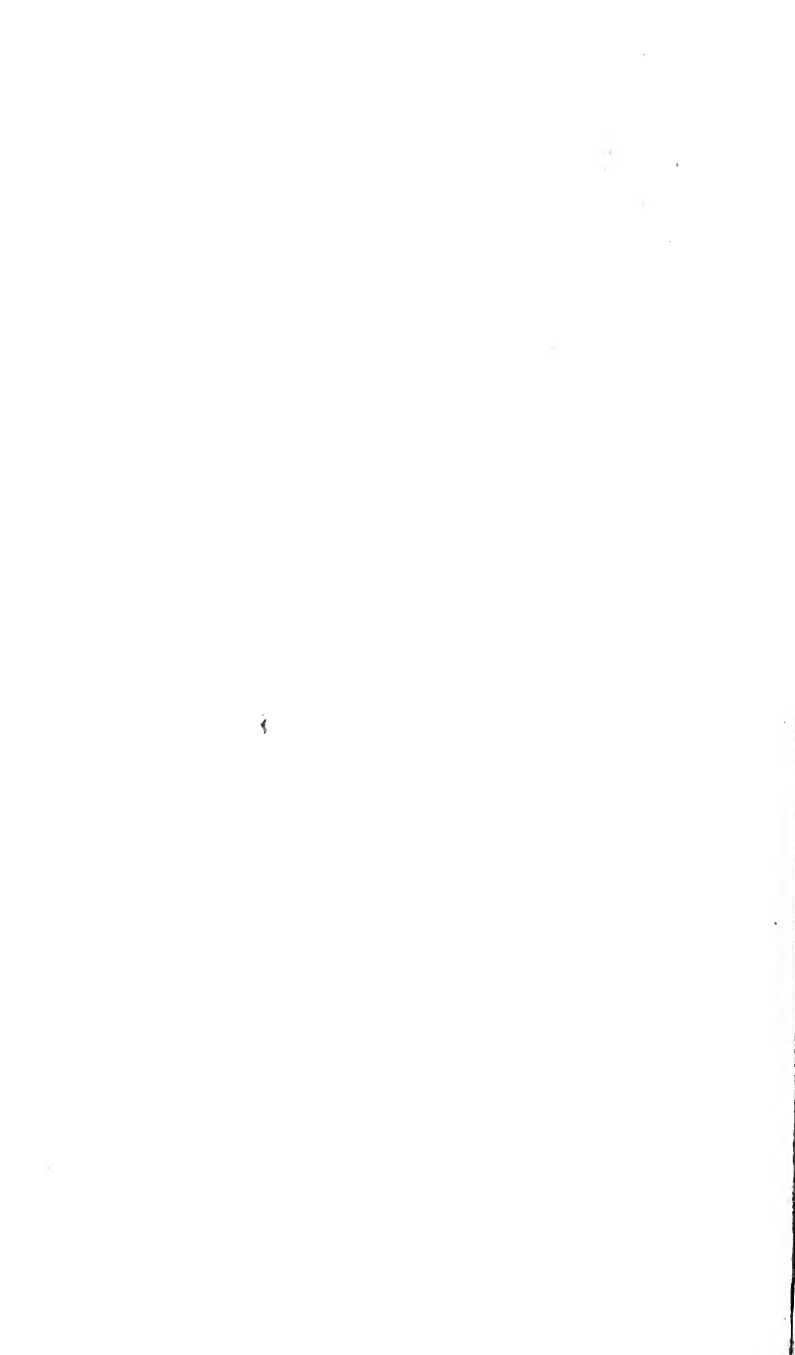
jections of Unbelievers. It is an easy matter, for Men of Leisure and tolerable Parts, to find Difficulties in particular Predictions, and in the Application of them made by Writers who lived many hundred Years ago, and who had many antient Books and Records of the Jewish Church, from which they drew many Passages, and perhaps some Prophecies; which Books and Records we have not to enable us to understand, and to justify their Applications. But 'tis not so easy a matter to shew, or to persuade the World to believe, that a Chain of Prophecies, reaching through several thousand Years, delivered at different Times, yet manifestly subservient to one and the same Administration of Providence, from Beginning to End, is the Effect of Art and Contrivance, and religious Fraud: That for so many Ages successively proper Persons should be found to carry on the Cheat; and that none of them should have any Interest to serve by betraying the Secret, or so much Honesty and Regard to Truth as to discover it.

The Account given in the fourth Discourse of the Remission of the Curse on the Ground, by Covenant with Noah and his Posterity, may be treated perhaps as the Effect of mere Fancy and Imagination;

PREFACE to the Reader.

tion; for there are many Prejudices which lie in its Way. All that I shall say more upon that Subject, is only this: If you allow the Account it carries on the Series of God's Dispensations towards Mankind, in a natural Gradation, and opens a new Scene of Providence, where there seems to be great Reason to expect one, at the Beginning of the new World: If you reject this Account, there seems to be a great Gap in the sacred History, and the new World sets out, just where the old one left off; and yet who would not expect that so great a Change should be attended with some new Degree of Light, to comfort and support the poor Remains of Mankind? If the Notion is not approved, it is at least an innocent one; and I am not so fond of it, as to enter further into the Defence of it.

As to the Dissertations which I have added, the Relation they have to the Subject of the Discourses will appear to those, who think them worth the Reading; and there is no Reason to trouble others with any Account of them.





DISCOURSE I.



2 PETER i. 19.

We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your Hearts.



HERE being evidently a Comparison in the Text between the *Word of Prophecy*, and something before mention'd or intend'd, 'tis necessary to look back to see how the Relation stands, and what the Thing is

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to which the *Word of Prophecy* is compar'd and preferr'd. At the 16th Verſe the Apoſtle ſays, *We have not followed cunningly deviſed Fables when we made known unto you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And after thus diſclaiming all Art and Deceit, in ſetting forth the Promiſes and Expectations of the Goſpel, he proceeds to declare upon what Evidence and Authority he had rais'd ſuch Expectations in them: *But (we) were Eye-witneſſes of his Ma-jeſty, for he received from God the Father Honour and Glory, when there came ſuch a Voice to him from the excellent Glory; This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed. And this Voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy Mount.* Immediately follow the Words of the Text; *We have alſo a more ſure Word of Prophecy.*

You ſee upon what Foundation their Inference ſtands, who aſſert, That the Evidence which Chriſtians have from Prophecy for the Certainty of their Hopes and Expectations, compar'd with the Evidence

vidence they have from the Preaching of the Apostles, who were Eye-witnesses and Ear-witnesses of what they report concerning the Majesty of Christ, is the greater and the surer Evidence; or in the Words of a late Author, That * “ Prophecy is a stronger Argument than a Miracle, which depends upon external Evidence and Testimony”. This Author has taken great Pains to shew, that the Argument from Prophecy for the Truths of Christianity, as managed and apply’d by the Writers of the New Testament, is absurd and ridiculous; and that we may not flatter our selves with Hopes of Assistance from other Arguments, he gives us this Text of St. *Peter*, to shew, by the Authority of our own Scriptures, that Prophecy, as bad an Argument as it is, is nevertheless the very best that our Cause affords: But his Views be to himself; what Truth there is in his Exposition and Application of this Part of Scripture, we shall soon see.

* *A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, printed 1724. p. 27.

Interpreters differ very much in expounding this Passage; but all, as far as I see, agree in rejecting this Sense, which gives a Superiority to the Evidence of Prophecy above all other Evidence, by which the Truth of the Gospel is confirm'd; and indeed the Text expounded to this Meaning, contradicts not only the general Sense of Mankind upon this Subject, but will be found likewise inconsistent with itself, and many other Places of Scripture: For, first, let any Man consider, and say upon what Proof and Evidence the Authority of Prophecy itself depends: Can any Prophet give greater Proof of his divine Mission, than the Power of working Miracles? And if this be the last and the greatest Proof he can give of his being sent by God, can the Evidence of Prophecy ever rise higher than the Evidence of Miracles, upon which it ultimately depends for all its Authority? When *Gideon* was call'd to the Deliverance of *Israel*, the Angel of the Lord came and said unto him, *The Lord is with thee, thou mighty Man of Valour; --- go in this thy Might, and thou*

thou shalt save Israel from the Hand of the Midianites; have not I sent thee? Here now was a Prophecy deliver'd by the Angel of the Lord to encourage his Undertaking. What says *Gideon* to this? He desires a Sign; *If now I have found Favour in thy Sight, then shew me a Sign that thou talkest with me.* A Sign is given him, a miraculous Sign; he is satisfy'd, and undertakes the Work appointed; to which he is again encouraged by two Miracles wrought at his Request, *Judges vii.* What think you now? The Prophecy deliver'd by the Angel was as much a Prophecy before, as it was after Miracles wrought in Confirmation of it: But was the Word of Prophecy more sure before the Miracles than after? If so, why was a Sign desir'd? And when desir'd, why was it granted? Does God work Miracles to humour Men in their Folly; or is it to confirm their Faith? If it be to confirm their Faith, then our Faith in the Prophets depends upon the Authority of Miracles; and since the Stream can never rise above the Spring-Head, the Evidence

of Prophecy cannot be greater than the Evidence of Miracles. But let us take an higher Instance ; *Moses* was the first, and the greatest Prophet of the Law, to whom God spoke *Face to Face* : He was call'd by God to deliver the Children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, and commission'd to assure them of God's immediate Protection. This I suppose was sufficient to make him a Prophet to *Israel* : But what says *Moses* ? *Behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to my Voice ; for they will say, the Lord hath not appeared unto thee.* Was this a foolish Complaint in *Moses* ? If it was, how came God to listen to it, and to furnish him with an Answer above all Exception, by giving him immediately a Power to work Miracles in Confirmation of his Prophecy ? Does not this Method of God's Proceeding plainly shew, that Miracles are the Prophets greatest Authority and Confirmation ? What is that superior Evidence of Prophecy then, which is said so much to exceed the Evidence of Miracles ? But to go on : The Comparison in the Text, with respect to St. *Peter* himself,

himself, is between the *Word of Prophecy* and the *immediate* Word of God: And according to this Exposition of the Text, St. *Peter* who declares, that he heard the Voice of God *himself* in the Mount, is made in his OWN Person to say, (for the Words are, *We have a more sure Word of Prophecy*;) That the dark Prophecies of the Old Testament were a surer and more certain Evidence, than this immediate Voice of God which he heard with his own Ears. Now what is Prophecy, that it should be more surely and certainly to be depended on than the immediate Voice of God? Is it possible to think that St. *Peter*, or any Man in his Wits, could make such a Comparison?

But further; let us consider what Account St. *Peter* himself gives of this *Word of Prophecy*; which we are told, is beyond Comparison the best and the surest Evidence we have for our Faith: He compares it to *a Light shining in a dark Place*; and distinguishes it from *Day-light*, and that Brightness which is usher'd in by the *Day-Star*. This *Word of Prophecy* then is here compar'd by St. *Peter*

to the glimmering Light of a Candle seen at a Distance in a dark Night ; which tho' it gives some Direction, yet is *nothing*, compar'd to clear Day-light. Is not this now a choice Account of the Evidence of the Gospel; nay, of the *very best* Evidence which we have of the Gospel? Are we still surrounded on all Sides with Darknes, assisted by one only distant glimmering Light? Was it thus that *Christ* came to be *a Light to lighten the Gentiles*, and to be *the Glory of Israel*? St. *Peter* in his first Epistle tells all Christians, that they *are called out of Darknes into God's marvellous Light*; how comes he then in this second Epistle to tell them, that they are still in Darknes, and have nothing but a Light glimmering in the Darknes to direct them? Can the same Writer possibly be suppos'd to give such different Accounts of our Gospel-State? Ask St. *Paul*, what State Christians are in, he will tell you, *That the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, has shone unto them*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Ask the Evangelists, they will tell you, *The Day-spring from*

from on high hath visited us, to give Light to them that sit in Darknefs, and in the Shadow of Death. Ask any, or all of the Apostles, they will tell you their Commission is, *To open the Eyes of the People, and to turn them from Darknefs to Light*; Acts xxvi. 16. agreeably to what our Lord told his Disciples, *Ye are the Light of the World*, Mat. v. 14. How different is this Account from that which St. *Peter* is suppos'd to give of the *best Light* we have under the Gospel, in Contradiction to himself, and almost every Writer of the New Testament?

But let us go one Step further, and we shall find, that St. *Peter* in the Text is so far from speaking of the *Word of Prophecy*, as of the best Light or Evidence to be had for the Point in question, whatever it was, that he manifestly speaks of it as *not the best*; but as a Light to be attended to only until a better comes: Hear his Words, *We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place,*

Place, UNTIL the Day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your Hearts. This Light you see is to be attended to only till the Day Light comes, so far is it from being itself the *best* Light, that it must give Way to a *better*. What the true Import and meaning of this is, we shall see hereafter. But surely St. *Peter* wou'd not have limited any Time, for their attending to the Word of Prophecy, had he been considering it as the best Support of Christian Faith; for in that Sense it ought ever to be attended to, and to be the constant Employment of a Christians Meditation, so long as Life and Thought remain with him.

These Reasons, I suppose, prevail'd with Interpreters to quit the apparent Sense of this Text, which seems to prefer the Authority of Prophecy, to the Authority of all other Evidence, whereby the Doctrine of the Gospel is confirmed; and to seek for some other, more conformable to Truth and Reason. But however they are agreed in rejecting *this* Sense, they are far from being agreed in establishing any *other*.

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The *Greek* Expositors suppose the Sense here to be, That Prophecy is *now, to us Christians*, a more sure and convincing Evidence than ever it was, having been verified and established by the Events. This Interpretation preserves the *Force* of the *Comparison*; but then it places the Comparison where *St. Peter* has not placed it; he manifestly compares the Evidence of Prophecy to the Evidence arising from the Glorification of *Christ*, attested by those, who delivered what they had heard and seen with their own Eyes and Ears: But of the Evidence and Weight of Prophecy *before* and *after* the Completion he says nothing. *Grotius* thought this Sense the most Convenient and has adopted it in his Commentary on the Place.

Others * suppose that the Comparative is used in this Text, in the Sense of the Positive, to express the great Certainty of the Evidence mentioned. According to them, the meaning is, “ That we have “ a very sure Evidence in the Words of

* *Erasmus, Junius and Tremellius.*

“ Prophecy:”

“Prophecy:” This Exposition introduces a new Use of Language into the Text, for which having no sufficient Authority to produce, it can claim no Authority itself. The Instances given to support this Construction, as far as I have seen, are not pertinently alledged.

Others; preserving the natural Signification of the Words, and therefore admitting the Comparison, will not however allow the Comparison to be *absolute*, but only *relative*; relative to the Opinions and Prejudices of the *Jews*, to whom this Epistle was directed. According to this Interpretation, the Apostle does not assert, That Prophecy is *in itself* a better Argument than the evangelical Evidence; but only that it is better *to Jews*; who being educated in an Esteem and Reverence for the Prophets from their Childhood, and being but new and tender Converts to the Gospel, had a much greater Regard to the Authority of their own Prophets, than to the Testimony of the Apostles. But as to this Exposition; in the first Place, there is nothing in the Text to countenance it: In the next Place;

Place; had this been St. *Peter's* meaning, he never wou'd have spoken in the first Person, and joined himself in the same Opinion with his Country-men: *WE have*, says he, *a more sure Word of Prophecy* — Now whatever the *Jews* thought, St. *Peter* cou'd not think that the antient obscure Prophecies, and which he compares immediately to *a Light shining in a dark Place*, were a stronger Evidence than the Miracles of *Jesus*, and the Attestation of God himself to the Truth of his Mission. This therefore cou'd not be St. *Peter's* Meaning.

These are the most considerable Expositions, which have been given of this Passage. 'Tis evident that all Interpreters have been sensible of the Absurdity of setting up Prophecy as a superior Evidence to all other Gospel Evidence; and that to avoid this Difficulty, they have been driven to seek out other Meanings. And yet without all Question, the Words of the Text according to their most natural Sense, do import that the Evidence of Prophecy, is a *surer* Evidence than
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that before mentioned ; which was the Apostles own Testimony of the Glory of *Christ*, which he had seen with his Eyes ; and of the Voice of God declaring *Christ* to be his beloved Son ; of which the Apostle was an Ear-witness in the Mount. But as natural as this Sense is, yet they who conclude from hence, that Prophecy is a better Evidence of the *Mission of Christ*; and the *Truth of the Gospel*, than any other Evidence, draw a Conclusion which the Text will not justify. For look back and see what is the Thing to be proved by this *more sure* Word of Prophecy ; is it the *Mission of Christ* ? St. *Peter* says nothing of it. Is it the *Truth of the Gospel* ? nothing less. The Apostle tells us in the 16th Verse ; That God declared *Christ* by a Voice from the excellent Glory, *To be his beloved Son* : But this is not the Thing he wou'd prove, for he brings this Declaration to prove something else : And this Declaration is considered as one of the Proofs to which he compares the Word of Prophecy.

To clear this Matter, let us consider
what

what it is that St. *Peter* intended to prove; for without knowing this, 'tis impossible to judge of the Comparison in the Text; for in some Cases *Prophecy* is no Proof, in others it may be our very best Evidence, notwithstanding that it is a glimmering Light, faintly shining thro' the Dark.

The second Epistle of St. *Peter* was written to support and maintain the Hopes and Expectations which he had raised in his first; as will be evident upon a Comparison of the two together. To the first Epistle therefore we must go, to see the Foundation and Rise of the Matter to which this controverted Text in the second relates.

The Christians, to whom the first Epistle was directed, were in a State of severe Tryal and Persecution; They were *for a Season in Heaviness thro' manifold Temptations*, i. 6. They were *spoken against as evil Doers*, ii. 12. iii. 16. iv. 4. They *suffered for Righteousness sake*, iii. 14. They were *reproached for the Name of Christ*, iv. 14. and were *made Partakers of his Sufferings*, x. 13. This being the Case, The Apostle administers suitable

ble Advice to them: He calls upon them to *arm themselves with the same Mind*, which was in *Christ*, who *suffered for us in the Flesh*, iv. 1. he bids them account it their Happiness that *they were reproached for the Name of Christ*, iv. 14. and *rejoyce that they were Partakers of his Sufferings*, v. 13. He reminds them that this *fiery Tryal* was no *strange* or surprizing Event; but what had been foretold, and what they had Reason to expect, iv. 12. And that *the same Afflictions were accomplished in their Brethren in the World*, v. 9. That the Time was come (foretold before) That *Judgment must begin at the House of God*, iv. 17.

Together with these Admonitions he gives the Assurance of a certain Deliverance near at Hand. He tells them they *were kept by the Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation ready to be revealed*, i. 5. That their Tryal wou'd yield *Honour and Glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ*, v. 7. he bids them have perfect *Hope and Confidence in the Grace*, or Deliverance, *to be brought at the Revelation*

velation of Christ Jesus, x. 13. in the Day of Visitation, ii. 12. For the certainty of this Deliverance, and *Salvation now ready* (or prepared) *to be revealed*, and of the Share they should have in it, he appeals to the antient Prophets, and the *Spirit of Christ in them, testifying before-hand the Sufferings of Christ and the Glory which should follow, i. 11.* Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things now reported unto you, *x. 12.* The first Scene, the Sufferings of *Christ* being over, *iv. 1.* his glory was ready to be reveal'd, which would bring them *exceeding Joy, iv. 13.* and be to the Destruction of their Persecutors, the *ungodly* and the *Sinners, x. 18.*

All these Hopes were founded in this, 'That *Christ* himself had *already* receiv'd *Glory* and *Power*, and would return in his *Glory* and *Power* to save true Believers. Our Trust in God is by *St. Peter* built upon this, that God *raised him* (*Christ*) *from the dead, and gave him Glory, 1 Pet. 1. 21.* And it is at the *Revelation* of this *Glory*, that Christians are taught to expect *exceeding Joy, iv. 13.* You see

now how much Weight is laid by St. *Peter* in his first Epistle upon the Expectation of Christ's *coming* in the *Power* and *Glory* of God.

It is very probable that the distressed Christians conceiv'd at first great Hopes from these Assurances given them by an Apostle of Christ; and expected (as it is natural for Men in Affliction to do) that every Day would bring their *Deliverance* with it. But when one Year after another pass'd, and no *Deliverance* came; when the *Scoffers* began to ridicule their Hopes, and ask'd in Mockery, *Where is the Promise of his Coming?* 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. their Hearts grew sick; and their Hopes deferr'd, instead of being any Comfort or Support to them, became an Addition of Grief, and fill'd them with Fears and Suspicions, lest they had believ'd in vain. Many of them, worn out with Distress and Persecution, began to give way, and willingly listen'd to the corrupt Teachers, who instructed them to keep fair with the World, and to keep their Faith to themselves; by Means of which wicked Doctrine, they
were

were *led away, and fell from their Steadfastness*, 2 Ep. chap. iii. v. 17. and to avoid suffering, *denied the Lord that bought them*, Chap. iii. v. 1.

In this State of Things, and at the Distance of five or six Years from the writing of the first Epistle, the Apostle sends his second Letter; and it answers in every Point to this Account. In the first Chapter the Apostle endeavours to re-establish and confirm the Hopes of *Believers*; but he does it with the Air of one who had been *reproached* for his Doctrine; *We have not*, says he, *followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known to you the POWER and COMING of the Lord Jesus*, chap. i. v. 16. You see here again the true Point upon which St. Peter placed the Hopes and Expectations of true Believers. In the second Chapter he takes Notice of the *false Teachers who brought in damnable Heresies, denying the Lord that bought them*; these he threatens with *swift Destruction*, v. 1. and tells them, That, however they might conceive of the *Promise of Christ's speedy Coming*,

yet they would assuredly find, that *their own Judgment* did not *linger*, nor their own *Damnation slumber*, *Ÿ. 3.* that it would *have been better for them, not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy Commandment delivered to them, Ÿ. 21.* In the third and last Chapter he considers the *Scoffers*, and their irreligious Insult, *Where is the Promise of his Coming? Ÿ. 4.* He enters into their Argument, and shews them from what had already happen'd in the World, how perversly they reason'd about future Things. He concludes the whole with proper Cautions to Christians, when they consider and endeavour to understand the Times and Seasons of God's Judgments; and guards, not only his own, but St. *Paul's* Doctrine upon this Article, the Coming of Christ, (so much was his Mind bent to clear this one Point) against the *perverse Use of the Unlearned and Unstable, Ÿ. 15, 16.*

You see now what is the main, the only great Point, in this second Epistle; it is the *Coming of Christ* in Power and
Glory,

Glory, to deliver the Faithful, and to take Vengeance of the Ungodly and Unbelievers, as foretold by the Prophets under both Testaments. But this *Coming* of Christ was *future* and at a Distance; and depended entirely (as to any Knowledge that could be had of it) upon the Authority of *Prophecy*: For which Reason St. *Peter* refers, in his first Epistle, to the antient Prophets, and to the inspir'd Preachers of the Gospel, to justify the Hopes he rais'd; *of which Salvation*, or Deliverance, says he, *the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the Grace that should come unto you*, chap. i. 10. which Things are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, *v.* 12. And for the same Reason in his second Epistle he refers again to *Prophecy*, as being of all others (and in Things of Futurity it needs must be) the *most sure Evidence*.

This Account of St. *Peter's* Epistles is indeed not mine, but his own: For he tells us expressly, That his Intention in

both his Epistles was, to make them, to whom they were sent, mindful of the Words which were spoken before of the holy Prophets, he adds, and of the Commandments of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour: 2 Ep. iii. 1, 2. That this latter Part relates to the same Subject as the former, will appear by comparing it with the Passage just before quoted, 1 Ep. i 12. where St. Peter considers the Apostles, as Prophets, or Expounders of the Prophets, under the Assistance of the Holy Ghost, preaching those very Things which the antient Prophets had testified beforehand.

Take this Key along with you, and see how it will open *this* so much perplex'd Passage of Scripture now under Consideration: The Apostle's Reasoning to the faithful Believers, is this, *We have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known unto you the POWER and COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were Eye-witnesses of his MAJESTY. For he received from God the Father HONOUR and GLORY, when there came such a Voice to him from the*
excellent

excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased. And this Voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy Mount. We have also a MORE SURE Word of Prophecy. 2 Ep. i. 16, &c.

'Tis evident that the POWER and COMING of our Lord *Jesus Christ* is the only Point here in Question ; not a Word is there relating to any other Fact or Doctrine of the Gospel. To prove *this Point*, the Apostle tells them he had been an *Eye-witness* of his MAJESTY, or GLORY. Whilst our Saviour liv'd on Earth, his Condition was mean, and his Fortune low ; this was a great Prejudice against him in the Opinion of the *Jews* ; who expected greater Things from their Redeemer, and could not easily hope to see him return in *Glory* and *Power*, who liv'd and dy'd so *meanly* and so *miserably*. 'Tis a sufficient Answer to all such Prejudices to prove, that, mean as he appear'd, he had a *real Majesty*, and was actually invested with *Honour* and *Glory* from God the Father.

But this Evidence manifestly extends but to one Part of the Point in Question, to shew that Christ had *himself* been glorified; what is there then to shew that he will ever *return again* in this *Glory* and *Power*? For allow all this to be true, might an Objector say; yet how does it prove the Hopes you would raise of his *speedy Return* in *Power* and *Glory*, to *deliver* his Servants, and to take *Vengeance* of his Foes? For what is *past* we willingly take your Word; you are a competent Witness of what your *Eyes beheld*, and of what your *Ears heard*: But will your seeing him in *Glory* on the Mount *some Years ago*, necessarily infer, that he shall come again in *Glory some Years hence*; and that too, to execute the very Purposes you declare? Can any Certainty, as to *future Events*, be collected from *past Events*? Or, can any thing we see *this Year*, assure us what will happen to us the *next*?

'Tis true, (we may suppose the Apostle to answer) all *future Events* are in the Hands of God; to him only are they known, and from him only can
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they

they certainly be learn'd. All other Arguments in this Case can amount only to Probabilities and Presumptions ; and a great Presumption 'tis that Christ shall come in *Glory*, that we have already seen him *glorified*; and it is a further Evidence of his *Power* to deliver his Servants, since God has openly declar'd him to be *his well-beloved Son* : But to assure us, that he will indeed *so come*, and *so use* his Power, *We have a more sure Word of Prophecy*: i.e. We have the very Word of God, (speaking by his Prophets) to whom all *Futurity* is *known*, to assure us of the Certainty of this *future* Event.

This Interpretation, as it is easy and natural in itself, and renders to every Expression in the Text its proper and usual Signification ; so it is necessary, I conceive, to the Apostle's Argument, and plainly inforc'd by the Context; and stands clear of all Difficulties. Here is no Pretence to say, That *Prophecy* is a better Argument for the *Truth* of the *Gospel*, than all the *Miracles* of Christ and his *Apostles*; for the *Truth* of the *Gospel* is not the Point here in Question.

St.

St. *Peter* speaks only of the *Coming of Christ in Power*, and of a *Salvation ready to be revealed*; which being yet to come, admitted of no surer Evidence than the *Word of Prophecy*; which yet, he tells us, was only as a *Light shining in a dark Place*: But the Gospel was not a Thing *ready to be revealed*, it had long since been reveal'd; the Gospel was not a *Light shining in a dark Place*, but, as he himself expressly calls it, a *marvellous Light*, into which they had been call'd out of *Darkness*. 1 Ep. ii. 9.

One Word more, and I have done with this Subject: The *more sure Word of Prophecy* here mention'd is not to be understood merely of the Prophecies of the *Old Testament*, for it may refer to the Prophecies of the *New*, and probably does, as appears by St. *Peter's* Appealing, not only to the antient Prophets, but also to the Preachers of the Gospel. How unhappily then was this Text made Choice of, to set up antient Prophecy in Opposition to the Gospel-Evidence, since the Prophecy here intended is probably itself a *Gospel-Evidence*; and so far from
being

being superiour to *all the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles*, that it owes all its Authority to them.

The giving Light to this Passage will furnish us with an Answer to one Objection rais'd against the Authority of this second Epistle of *S. Peter* : The learned *Grotius* judg'd from some Characters which he observ'd in it, that this second Epistle was penn'd after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; before which *St. Peter* was dead. But 'tis very evident that the Author of this second Epistle speaks of *Christ's Coming* in *Power and Glory*, in the very Manner which *St. Peter* speaks of it in the first Epistle; and indeed with no other View than that of justifying what was deliver'd in the first Epistle. If by the *Salvation ready to be revealed*, and the *Day of Visitation*, and the *Appearing of Jesus Christ*, in the first Epistle, we are to understand the Apostle as referring to the Destruction of *Jerusalem* then near at hand; we must necessarily in the second Epistle understand the same Thing by the *Power and Coming* of our *Lord Jesus*. Which Power and
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Coming was at the Time of writing the second Epistle, so far from being over, that it is treated as a Thing to come; and for the Certainty of which St. *Peter* had no better Evidence than the *Word of Prophecy*: Or, if any other Coming of Christ is to be understood in this second Epistle, the same must be understood in the first; for the second is but a Vindication of the Doctrine of the first. And no Notion common to *both Epistles* can be an Objection against the second, since the first was never doubted of in the Church. And indeed, whoever reads the two Epistles, and compares them carefully, will see such a Concern in the second to support the Sentiments of the first, that he will be inclin'd to think, that the second Epistle could come from no other Hand, but that which penn'd the first.





DISCOURSE II.



LET us proceed to consider the Character which *St. Peter* gives of *Prophecy*, and the *Degree* of Evidence which we may reasonably expect from it. *Prophecy is a Light shining in a dark place, and we do well to give Heed to it until the Day dawn.* *St. Peter's* Meaning is this, “ The Time will come when the Things you hope for shall be placed in a clear Light, when you shall see all your Expectations fully justify’d in the Accomplishment; in the mean while ye do well to attend to Prophecy, tho’ but a small glimmering Light, and shining at a Distance in a dark Place, yet the best

“best you have, or can have at present” Metaphorical Expressions and Similitudes ought not to be rigidly and strictly canvassed, ’tis sufficient to see the general Import and Meaning of them; which in the present Case is very clear and amounts to this, That the Knowledge God gives us of Things future by the means of Prophecy, is but an imperfect obscure Knowledge, nothing to be compared to the clear Knowledge that will attend upon the Manifestation of the Things themselves.

I shall endeavour to confirm this Proposition by the Authority of Scripture; and to suggest some Observations which may be of Use, when we are called upon to judge of the Nature of Prophecy, and the Evidence arising from it.

Whether Prophecy be a clear Evidence before the Completion, or no, is no Matter of Controversy; so far from it, that they who tell us Prophecy is the *best* Argument even for Christianity, do not yet think it a clear one. But without Regard to any Man’s Opinion, it will be proper to see what Notion the inspir-
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ed Writers themselves had of the Word of Prophecy.

If we look into the first Epistle of St. *Peter*, we shall find that the *antient Prophecies*, of which he speaks in the Text, and which he styles the *more sure Word of Prophecy*, were not apprehended or clearly understood by those inspired Persons who delivered them; for there he represents them *searching what or what manner of Time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow*, i. 11. To the same Purpose our Saviour speaks, *Matt. xiii. 17. Many Prophets and righteous Men have desired to see those Things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those Things which ye hear, and have not heard them*. St. *Paul* gives the like Account of the Gift of Prophecy under the Gospel Dispensation: *We know in Part, and we prophesy in Part: But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in Part shall be done away. Now we see thro' a Glass darkly; but then Face to Face:*

Face: Now I know in Part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 12. Now if the Prophets and righteous Men of old to whom the Word of God came, did not clearly understand the things which they foretold; but employed themselves, in searching and examining the prophetical Testimonies of the Spirit which was in them; if the Prophets of the new Testament knew only in Part, and prophesied only in Part, seeing but darkly as thro' a Glass; 'tis most evident that others, in all Appearance less qualified than they, to understand the determinate Sense of the Prophecies, cou'd have but a confused and indistinct Notion of the Things foretold.

The Prophet *Daniel* after a very extraordinary Vision which he reports in his last Chapter, immediately adds, *I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the End of these Things? And he said, Go thy Way, Daniel: for the Words are closed up and sealed till the Time of the End.* The Answer here given to *Daniel*, is very like the Answer which our Saviour gave
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the Apostles, upon a like Enquiry made by them: They ask, *Lord, wilt thou at this Time restore again the Kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the Times or Seasons, which the Father hath put in his own Power,* Acts i. 6, 7. It did belong to them undoubtedly, and to every believing Jew, to give heed to the Word of Prophecy according to St. Peter's Exhortation in the Text; and since it did not belong to them to know the Times and Seasons, 'tis evident the Word of Prophecy was not intended to give a clear and distinct Light in this Case.

These last Passages relate to such Prophecies especially, as seem to design the Times and Seasons of God's Working: And these Predictions being oftentimes delayed in the Accomplishment much beyond the Expectation of those to whom they were delivered, it brought the Prophets and their Predictions frequently into Contempt; and gave the People Occasion to harden themselves against the Fears and Apprehensions of the Evils threatened. Hence came the Reproach upon

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the Prophets, taken Notice of by *Ezek.* *The Vision that he seeth is for many Days to come; and he prophesieth of the Times that are far off: xxii. 27.* Which Speech grew up into a Proverb; *What is that Proverb that ye have in the Land of Israel, saying, The Days are prolonged, and every Vision faileth, 22.* The Case is very much the same in Regard to other Prophecies. Whoever looks into the Prophetical Writings, will find that they are generally penned in a very exalted Style, full of bold Figures describing the Judgments or the Mercies of God; representing spiritual Blessings under the Images of temporal Prosperity, and oftentimes such Images as cannot possibly admit of a literal Interpretation. In which Case tho' we may see the general Intent and Meaning, and find sufficient Ground for Hope and Fear from the Scope of the Prophecy, yet we can with no Certainty fix the precise and determinate Manner in which the Words are to be fulfilled.

Prophecy is, by the Author of Prophecy, thus described: *I have multiplied Visions, and used Similitudes by the Ministry*

stry of the Prophets. Hosea. xii. 10. Which Similitudes are elsewhere spoken of as *dark Speeches* delivered to the Prophets in *Visions* and in *Dreams*. Numb. xii. 6, 8. For this Reason the *Jews*, when they spoke with Contempt of their Prophets, were used to say, *Doth he not speak Parables?* Ezek. xx. 49. Our Saviour seems to speak of the Antient Prophecies under the same Character: *Know ye not*, says he to his Disciples, *this Parable?* and *how then will ye know all Parables?* Mark. iv. 13. That is, if ye understand not this plain Parable of the Sower, how will ye understand all the antient Prophecies relating to the Gospel, which are much harder *Parables?*

These Passages are sufficient to prove, that Prophecy was never intended to be a very distinct Evidence; and to shew St. *Peter's* meaning in comparing the Word of Prophecy to a Light shining in a dark Place, and in making this Evidence so much inferior to the Evidence we are to receive, when the Fulness of Time comes for the Manifestation of God's Promises.

But allowing this to be the Case of Prophecy at the Time of Delivery, are we not however to expect to find the Prophecy clear and distinct, and exactly corresponding to the Event, whenever the Event comes into Existence? and consequently; is it not absurd after an Event is come to pass, to apply any antient Prophecies to it, that do not manifestly, to the Eyes of common Sense, appear to belong to it? These Questions being admitted, another will be asked; How comes it to pass, that many of the Prophecies, applied by the Writers of the Gospel to our Saviour and his Actions, are still dark and obscure; and so far from belonging evidently to him, and him only, that it requires much Learning and Sagacity to shew even now the Connexion between some Prophecies and the Events?

In answer to these Questions we must observe: That the Obscurity of Prophecy does not arise from hence, that it is a Relation or Description of something *future*; for 'tis as easy to speak of Things future plainly and intelligibly, as it is of Things

Things past or present. The same Language serves in both Cases with little Variation. He who says, the River will overflow its Banks next Year, speaks as plainly as he who says, it did overflow its Banks last Year. It is not therefore of the Nature of Prophecy to be obscure, for it may easily be made, when he who gives it thinks fit, as plain as History.

On the other Side, a figurative and dark Description of a future Event will be figurative and dark still when the Event happens; and consequently will have all the Obscurity of a figurative dark Description as well after as before the Event. The Prophet *Isaiab* describes the Peace of *Christ's* Kingdom in the following Manner: *The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lye down with the Kid, and the Calf, and the young Lion, and the Fatling together, and a little Child shall lead them*, xi. 6. No body, I suppose (some modern *Jews* excepted) ever understood this literally; nor can it now be literally applied to the State of the Gospel; it was, and is capable of different Interpretations: It

may mean temporal Peace; and that either publick of Kingdoms and Nations, or private among the Professors of the Gospel: It may prefigure an internal and spiritual Peace, the Tranquillity of Mind which sets a Man at Peace with God, himself, and the World. But whatever the true Meaning is, this Prophecy expounded by the Rules of Language only, does no more obtrude one determinate Sense upon the Mind since the coming of *Christ*, than it did before. But then we say, the State of the Gospel was very properly prefigured in this Description, and is as properly prefigured by an hundred more of the like Kind; and since they all agree in a fair Application to the State of the Gospel, we strongly conclude, that the Gospel State was the Thing foretold under these and many other like Expressions. So that the Argument from Prophecy for the Truth of the Gospel does not rest upon this, that the Event has necessarily limited and ascertained the particular Sense and Meaning of every Prophecy; but in this, that every Prophecy has in a *proper* Sense been compleated by the Com-

Coming of *Christ*. 'Tis absurd therefore to expect clear and evident Conviction from every single Prophecy applied to *Christ*, the Evidence must arise from a View and Comparison of all together.

Prophecies are not all of one Kind, or of equal Clearness: The most literal Prophecies relating to *Christ* were not always at the Time of the Delivery the plainest; for many of these relating to the most surprizing and wonderful Events under the Gospel, wanted not the Veil or Cover of figurative Language; for being plainly foretold, they cou'd hardly, for the seeming Incredibility of the Things themselves, be received and admitted in their true literal Meaning. *A Virgin shall conceive a Son*, was a Proposition which seem'd to want some other Interpretation than a literal one, which was inconsistent with all Experience of the World: And therefore probably this Prophecy was not understood by the antient *Jews*, as importing a miraculous Conception. The Event has not made this Prophecy clearer than it was before; the Language of it was as

well understood in the Prophets Time as now; but common Sense led every Man to understand it in a Sense agreeable to Nature and Experience: But the Event has shew'd us, that the plain literal Sense, however inconsistent with the Experience of Nature, is the true Sense. In like Manner the Prophecies from which the Resurrection of *Christ* is inferred, were obscure and dark from a seeming Inconsistency between the several Parts of them. It is foretold, that *Christ* shou'd be *despised and rejected of Men*, a Man of *Sorrow and Affliction*; that his Affliction shou'd pursue him even to the *Grave*; and 'tis also foretold, that notwithstanding these Sufferings, and a wretched Death, he shou'd *prolong his Days*, and have an *everlasting Kingdom*, and *see the Work of the Lord prosper in his Hands*. These Prophecies are not at all plainer now than they were in the Beginning: But the plain Sense appeared at that Time loaded with Contradictions; here was one born to *Misery and Affliction*, and yet he was the Heir of an *everlasting Kingdom*: He was *condemned*,

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ed, executed, laid in the Grave, and after all this he was to prolong his Days, and see the Work of the Lord prosper in his Hands. The Resurrection of *Christ* reconciled all these Difficulties, and seeming Inconsistencies; and we now readily admit these Phophecies in their plain literal Sense; which was a very plain Sense before, tho' a very hard one to be imagined or believed.

You may observe then, that the most literal Prophecies have receiv'd the greatest Confirmation. and the most Light from the Event. For the Difficulty in this Case not lying in the Darknes or Obscurity of the Expression, but in the seeming Impossibility of the Thing foretold, such seeming Impossibility the Event fully clear'd: But no Event can make a figurative or metaphorical Expression to be a plain or a literal one; or restrain the Language of any Prophecy to one determinate Sense only, which was originally capable of many.

I have said thus much to shew what Sort of Clearness and Evidence we ought to expect from Prophecies after their Accom-

complishment: 'Tis a great Prejudice against this Argument, when Men come to it expecting more from it than it will yield. This they are led to by hearing it often said, That Prophecy, however dark and obscure at first, grows wonderfully plain upon the Accomplishment: Which in some Cases, as I have shewn, is in Fact true; but is not, cannot be so in all Cases.

You may think it perhaps strange, that I should be here pleading, as it were, for the Obscurity of antient Prophecies; whereas, you may very well conceive, it would be more to the Purpose of a Christian Divine to maintain their Clearness. Now as *Moses* in another Case said, *I would to God all the Lord's People were Prophets*; so say I in this Case, I would to God all the Prophecies of the Lord were manifest to all his People. But it matters little what we wish for, or think best, we must be content with such Light and Direction as God has thought proper to bestow on us: And to enquire why the antient Prophecies are not clearer, is like enquiring, why God
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has not given us more Reason, or made us as wise as Angels : He has given us in both Cases so much Light as he thought proper, and enough to serve the Ends he intended.

It is, doubtless, a Mistake to conceive Prophecy to be intended solely or chiefly for their Sakes in whose Time the Events predicted are to happen. What great Occasion is there to lay in so long beforehand the Evidence of Prophecy to convince Men of Things that are to happen in their own Times; the Truth of which they may, if they please, learn from their own Senses? How low an Idea does it give of the Administration of Providence, in sending Prophets one after another, in every Age from *Adam* to *Christ*, to imagine, that all this *Apparatus* was for their Sakes who liv'd in, and after the Times of *Christ*, with little Regard to the Ages to whom the Prophecies were deliver'd? As I think the Prophecies of the New Testament are chiefly for our Sake, who live by Faith and not by Sight ; so I imagine the antient Prophecies had the like Use, and
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were chiefly intended to support the Faith and Religion of the old World. Had it been otherwise, a Set of Prophecies given some few Years before the Birth of Christ, would have serv'd our Purpose as well as a Series of Prophecies given from the very Beginning, and running thro' every Age.

Let us then consider the Use of Prophecy, and this will help us to conceive the Degree of Clearness which ought to attend it. Some People are apt to talk as if they thought the Truth of the Events predicted depended very much upon the Evidence of Prophecy; they speak, for Instance, as if they imagin'd the Certainty and Reality of our Saviour's Resurrection were much concern'd in the Clearness of the Prophecies relating to that great and wonderful Event, and seem to think that they are confuting the Belief of his Resurrection, when they are trying to confound the Prophecies relating to it. But can any thing be more absurd? For what Ground or Pretence is there to enquire, whether the Prophecies foreshewing that the *Messiah* should

die and rise again, do truly belong to *Christ*, unless we are first satisfy'd, that *Christ* dy'd, and rose again? We must be in Possession of the Fact, before we can form any Argument from Prophecy: And therefore the Truth of the Resurrection, consider'd as a Fact, is quite independent of the Evidence or Authority of Prophecy.

The Part which Unbelievers ought to take in this Question, if they would make any Use of Prophecy, should be to shew from the Prophets, that *Christ* was necessarily to rise from the dead; and then to prove, that in Fact *Jesus* never did rise: Here would be a plain Consequence. But if they do not like this Method, they ought to let the Prophecies alone; for if *Christ* did not rise, there is no Harm done if the Prophets have not foretold it: And if they allow the Resurrection of *Christ*, what do they gain by discrediting the Prophecies? The Event will be what it is, let the Prophecies be what they will.

There are many Prophecies in the Old Testament relating to the *Babylonish*
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Captivity, and very distinct they are; describing the Ruin of the holy City, the Destruction of the Temple, the carrying the Tribes into a distant Country, and the Continuance of the Captivity for seventy Years. Can you suppose these Prophecies intended to convince the People of the Reality of these Events when they should happen? Was there any Danger they should imagine themselves safe in their own Country, when they were Captives at *Babylon*, unless they had the Evidence of Prophecy for their Captivity? Or, that they should think their Temple standing in all its Glory, when it was ruin'd before their Eyes? If the Supposition be absurd in this Case, 'tis so in every Case; for the Argument from Prophecy is in all Instances the same. 'Tis plain then, that Matters related in the Gospel do not depend for their Reality upon the Evidence of Prophecy; they may be true, tho' never foretold, or very obscurely foretold; nay, they must be admitted as true, before we can so much as enquire whether any Prophecy belongs to them.

But if this be the Case, that we must admit all the Facts of the Gospel to be true, before we can come at the Evidence of Prophecy, what Occasion have we, you'll say, to enquire after Prophecy at all? Are not the many Miracles of *Christ*, his Resurrection from the dead, his Ascension to Heaven, the Pouring forth the Gifts of the Spirit upon the Apostles, their speaking with Tongues, and doing many Wonders in the Name of *Christ*, sufficient Evidence to us of the Truth of the Gospel, without troubling our selves to know whether these Things were foretold, or in what manner they were foretold? To answer this Question plainly, I think such Facts once admitted to be true, are a compleat Evidence of the divine Authority of a Revelation: And had we known no more of *Christ*, than that he claimed to be attended to as a Person sent and commission'd by God, he needed no other Credentials than these already mentioned; and it would have been impertinent to demand what Prophet foretold his Coming. For in a like Case, who foretold the Coming of
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Moses to be a Law-giver to *Israel*? God had promised *Abraham* to give his Posterity the Land of *Canaan*; but that he would give it by *Moses* he had not promised; that he would talk with him *Face to Face*, and deliver his Law to him, and by him to the People, he had not foretold: The Authority therefore of *Moses*, as a divine Lawgiver, stands upon the miraculous Works perform'd by him; and the wonderful Attestations given to him by the Presence of God in the Mount, in the Eyes of all the People; but upon Prophecy it does not stand, for of him there were no Prophecies. This shews that Prophecy is not an Evidence essential to the Proof of a divine Revelation; for it may be spared in one as well as another.

But the Case of the Gospel differs from that of the Law; for though the Law was not prophecy'd of, yet the Gospel was; he who delivered the Law was one of the first who prophecy'd of the Gospel, and told the People so long beforehand, *That God would raise a Prophet like unto him, whom they must hear in all Things:*

Things: By which Prediction he guarded the People against the Prejudice which his own Authority was like to create against a new Lawgiver; telling them beforehand that when the great Prophet came, their Obedience ought to be transferred to him. The succeeding Prophets speak more fully of the Office, Character, Sufferings, and Glory of the *Saviour of Israel*, and the *Desire* of all *Nations*. Now one of the Characters, which our Saviour constantly assumes and claims in the Gospel, is this, That he is the Person spoken of by *Moses* and the Prophets. Whether he is this Person or no, must be try'd by the Words of Prophecy; and this makes the Argument from Prophecy so far necessary to establish the Claim of the Gospel; and it has been very *justly*, as well as *acutely* observed, that the Proof of this Point must rely entirely on the Evidence of Prophecy. Miracles in this Case can afford no Help; If the Prophets have not spoken of *Christ*, all the Miracles in the World will not prove that they have spoken of him (*a*).

(*a*) Grounds and Reasons, *Pag.* 31.

These Considerations shew how far the Gospel is necessarily concerned in prophetical Evidence. *Christ* has done the Works which no Man ever did, and given the fullest Evidence of a divine Commission; but he claims to be the Person foretold in the Law and the Prophets: and as Truth must ever be consistent with it self, this Claim must be true, or it destroys all others. This is the Point then to be tryed on the Evidence of Prophecy: Is *Christ* that Person described and foretold under the Old Testament, or no? Whether all the Prophecies relating to him be plain, or not plain; Whether all the Ways used by the Jews of arguing from the Old Testament, be convincing to us, or no, it matters little: The single Question is, Is there enough plain to shew us that *Christ* is the Person foretold under the Old Testament? If there is, we are at an end of our Enquiry, and want no further Help from Prophecy; especially since we, to use St. *Peter's* Expression, *have in this Case seen the Day dawn, and enjoyed the marvellous Light of the Gospel of God.*

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I am not now speaking of the great *Advantage* that may be made of prophetic Evidence for convincing Unbelievers of the Truth of the Gospel; but am considering how far the Truth of the Gospel *necessarily* depends upon this kind of Evidence. These are two very different Enquiries. It is *necessary* for us to shew that *Christ* is the Person promis'd to be a Saviour to *Israel*; and when we have shew'd this, no Opposer of the Gospel has more to demand. But we may carry our Enquiries much further; we may contemplate all the Steps of Providence relating to the Salvation and Religion of Mankind in the several Ages of the World, and by a Comparison of all the Parts may discern that *Christ* was indeed the *End* of the *Law*, and of all Promises made to the Fathers: That all the Deliverances given by God to his People were but Shadows, and as it were an Earnest of the great Deliverance he intended to give by his Son: That all the Ceremonials of the Law were Representations of the Substance of the Gospel: That the *Aaronical* Sacrifices and

Priesthood were Figures of better Things to come. But these Enquiries do not stand in the Rank of Things to be *necessarily* prov'd to every Believer, they do not enter into the *Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* expressly tells us ; but belong to those *who go on to Perfection*: Which Distinction given by the Apostle in the fifth and sixth Chapters to the *Hebrews* is well worth considering, as being a Key to open the true Use of all typical and allegorical Applications of Scripture.





DISCOURSE III.



T is necessary to take this Matter higher, to look back to the Rise and Progress of Divine Prophecy, and to observe what Ends the Wisdom of God intended to serve by Means of it. 'Tis no *Commendation* of Prophecy to say, that 'tis very dark and obscure; nor yet can it be a *Reproach*, provided it answers all the Ends design'd by Providence. To enable ourselves therefore to judge of Prophecy, we must enquire to what End Prophecy was given: And this is the Subject I now propose to your Consideration.

It will not be said, because it cannot be maintain'd, That we have any *Right*

to the Knowledge of Things future. God is not oblig'd either in Wisdom or Goodness, and much less in Justice, to declare to us the Things which shall be hereafter. In Regard therefore to the Knowledge of Futurity, whether it be little, or much, or nothing that God thinks fit to communicate to us, we can have no Reason to complain; for having no *Right*, we can pretend no *Injury*. Since therefore we have no Demand on God for this Sort of Knowledge in *any* Degree *whatever*, 'tis evident that whenever we have it, we must ascribe our having it to some *special Reasons* of Providence, which Reasons alone can limit the Degree of Light and Knowledge, which ought to attend upon the Word of Prophecy: For if we have from Prophecy so much Light as fully answers the End of giving the Prophecy, I wou'd fain know upon what Reason we can form a Complaint for want of more? I mean this, to shew how absurd it is for Men to take Counsel of their Curiosity when they consider the Use and Weight of Prophecy: In this View they will find nothing

thing to satisfy them: They may go on for ever asking, Why are we not told more, or more distinctly? Which Questions we may promise to answer, whenever they inform us upon what Right they demand to be told any thing; which if they cannot do, all such Complaints must be laid aside; and we must come to the only proper and material Consideration; *What End did the Wisdom of God propose to serve by the antient Prophecies, and how has this End been served by them?*

“ By Prophecy I understand all the
“ Declarations which God has made con-
“ cerning the future State of Mankind
“ in this World, or in the next; conse-
“ quently, all the Hopes and Expecta-
“ tions which are grounded on God’s
“ Promises, and do not result from Rea-
“ son and natural Knowledge, I refer to
“ Prophecy, as their Original.” If there
be any other kind of Prophecy, not
comprehended in this Description, there
may be perhaps, before we take leave of
this Subject, a proper Place to consi-
der it; but at present I shall confine my

self within the Limits of this Description.

It cannot be supposed that God has delivered Prophecies, only to satisfy or employ the Curiosity of the Inquisitive; or that he gave his Spirit to Men merely to enable them to give forth Predictions for the Amusement and Entertainment of the World. There must be some End intended *worthy* of the *Author*. What End can you conceive *worthy* of *God*, but the Promotion of Virtue and Religion, and the general Peace and Happiness of Mankind? These Things belong to him, as Creator and Governour of the World: These Things are his Province.

'Tis true, you'll say, these Things do belong indeed to God; but what has Prophecy to do with these Things? God can govern the World without letting us into his Secrets; and as for Virtue and Religion and our own Happiness, he has given us a plain Law to walk by, the Result of that Reason and Knowledge with which he hath endowed us. Prophecy can never contradict or over-rule the
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Light of Reason and Nature; nor can we suppose that we came so imperfect and unfinished out of the Hands of our Creator, as not to have Light enough to see our own Duty, and to pursue our natural Happiness, but to want at every turn an Admonisher at our Elbow.

Let us allow the original State of Nature to be as perfect and compleat as you desire.

But what if the Case should be altered? How will Matters stand then? 'Tis no unreasonable Supposition, this; for since Man was created a moral Agent, with Freedom of Will, it was possible for him *to fall*; and consequently, *possibly* he may *have fallen*. Let us suppose for the present this to be the Case; and tell us now from natural Religion, what must such Sinners do? REPENT, you'll say; for 'tis agreeable to the Goodness of God to accept Repentance, and to restore Offenders to his Favour? Very well; but how often will this Remedy serve? May Sin and Repentance go on for ever in a perpetual Round? To allow this, differs nothing from allowing
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a Liberty and Impunity to sin without Repentance. If God is Governour and Judge of the World, there must be a time for Judgment; and Men may, after all reasonable and equitable Allowances made, be ripe for Judgment. Let this be the Case then, suppose a Man, after all equitable Allowances made, to be condemned under and by the Law of Nature, and living in daily Expectation of Execution: I ask, what sort of Religion you would advise him to in the mean Time? — Natural Religion? — To what Purpose? — He has had his Tryal and Condemnation by that Law already, and has nothing to learn from it but the Misery of his Condition. I do not mean that the *Sense* of natural Religion will be lost in such a Man. He may see perhaps, more clearly than ever he did, the Difference between Good and Evil, the Beauty of moral Virtue, and feel the Obligations which a rational Creature is under to his Maker: But what Fruit will all this Knowledge yield? What certain Hope or Comfort will it administer? A Man with a Rope about his Neck may

see the Equity and Excellency of the Law by which he dies ; and if he does, he must see that the Excellency of it is, to protect the Virtuous and Innocent ; but what is this Excellency to him who has forfeited the Protection of all Law ? If you would recommend *natural Religion* exclusively of all other Assistance, 'tis not enough to shew from Principles of Reason the *Excellency* and *Reasonableness* of moral Virtue, or to prove from the *Nature* of *God*, that he must delight in, and reward Virtue : You must go one Step further, and prove from the *Nature* of *Man* too, that he is *excellently* qualify'd to obey this Law, and cannot well fail of attaining all the Happiness under it, that ever Nature designed for him. If you stop short at this Consideration, what do you gain ? What imports it, that the *Law* is *good*, if the *Subjects* are so *bad*, that either they will not, or cannot obey it ? When you prove to Sinners the Excellency of natural Religion, you only shew them how justly they may expect to be punish'd for their Iniquity. A sad Truth which wants no

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Confirmation! All the possible Hope left, in such a Case is, that God may freely pardon and restore them; but whether he will or no, the Offenders can never certainly learn from natural Religion.

Should God think fit to be reconciled to Sinners, *natural Religion* would again become the *Rule* of their future Tryal and Obedience; but their *Hopes* must flow from *another* Spring; their Confidence in God must, and can arise only from the *Promise* of God; that is, from the *Word of Prophecy*; for which Reason *Prophecy* must for ever be an essential Part of *such* a Sinner's Religion.

This Reasoning agrees exactly with the antientest and most authentick Account we have of the Beginning of Prophecy in the World. When God had finish'd all his Works, and *Man, the chief of them*, he viewed them all, and *behold* they were *very good*. How long *this Goodness* lasted we know not, that it did not last very long, is certain. During the Time of Man's Innocence there were frequent Communications between God and him, but not the least

Hint

Hint of any *Word of Prophecy* delivered to him. The *Hopes of Nature* were then *alive* and *vigorous*, and Man had before him the Prospect of all that Happiness to which he was created, to encourage and support his Obedience. In this State *natural Religion* wanted no *other Assistance*, and therefore *it* had no *other*.

But when the Case was altered by the Transgression of our first Parents; when natural Religion had no longer any sure Hopes or Comforts in Reserve, but left them to the fearful Expectation of Judgment near at Hand; when God came down to judge the Offenders, and yet with Intention *finally* to rescue and preserve them from the Ruin brought on themselves: *Then* came in the *Word of Prophecy*; not in Opposition to *natural Religion*, but in *Support* of it; and to convey *new Hopes* to Man, since *his own* were irrecoverably lost and extinguished in the *Fall*.

The Prophecy *then* given being the first, and indeed, (as I conceive) the Ground-work and Foundation of all that have
been

been since ; It well deserves our particular Consideration.

It may be expected perhaps that the Way should be cleared to this Enquiry, by removing first the Difficulties which arise from the historical Narration of the Fall ; and cou'd any thing *material* be added in Support of what is commonly said upon this Subject, the Time and Pains would be well placed: But the *more* and the *oftner* this Case is considered in all its Circumstances, the more will the commonly receiv'd Interpretation prevail ; which is evidently the true antient Interpretation of the Jewish Church, as appears by the Allusions to the History of the Fall, to be met with in the Books of the old Testament.

To some Unbelievers, if I mistake not their Principles, the *History of the Fall* would have been altogether as *incredible*, tho' perhaps not quite so *diverting*, had it been told in the *simplest* and *plainest* Language.

'Tis to little Purpose therefore to trouble them with Account of the *Genius* of the *Eastern People*, and their *Language* ;
for

for you may as soon persuadethem, that *a Serpent* tempted *Eve*, as that any evil Spirit did. If you ask, Why the *Devil* might not as well *speak* to *Eve* under the *Form* of a *Serpent*, as give out Oracles to the old *Heathen World* under *that* and many *other Forms*; you gain nothing by the Question; for *Oracles* whether *Heathen* or *Jewish* are to them alike; they dispute, not their *Authority*, but their *Reality*. This is a Degree of Unbelief which has no Right to be admitted to debate the Question now under Consideration.

As to others, who are not Infidels with regard to Religion in general, yet are shocked with the Circumstances of this History; I desire *them* to consider, that the *Speculations* arising from the History of the *Fall*, and the Introduction of *natural* and *moral* Evil into the World, are of all others the most abstruse and furthest removed out of our reach: That this Difficulty led Men in the *earliest* Time to imagine two *independent* Principles of *Good* and *Evil*, a Notion destructive of the Sovereignty of God; the Maintenance
of

of which is the principal End and Design of the *Mosaic* History. Had the History of Man's Fall plainly introduced an *invisible evil Being* to confound the Works of God and to be the *Author* of *Iniquity*, it might have given great Countenance to this Error, of two Principles: Or, to prevent it, *Moses* must have writ an History of the *Angels Fall*, likewise; a Point, I suppose, to which his Commission did not extend, and of which perhaps we are not capable Judges; and since this Difficulty might in a great Measure be avoided by having recourse to the common Usage of the *Eastern Countries*; which was to cloath History in *Parables* and *Similitudes*, it seems not improbable, that for *this Reason* the History of the Fall was put into the Dress, in which we now find it.

The *Serpent* was remarkable for an *insidious Cunning*, and therefore stood as a proper Emblem of a *Deceiver*; and yet being one of the *lowest* of the *Creatures*, the Emblem gave no Suspicion of any Power concerned that might pretend to *rival* the *Creator*.

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This Method has not so obscured this History, but that we may with great Certainty come to the Knowledge of all that is necessary for us to know. Let us consider the History of *Moses*, as we should do any other antient *Eastern* History of like Antiquity: Suppose, for instance, that this Account of the Fall had been preserved to us out of *Sancho-niatho's Phœnician* History: We should in that Case be at a Loss perhaps to account for every Manner of *Representation*, for every *Figure* and *Expression* in the Story; but we shou'd soon agree that all these Difficulties were imputable to the *Manner* and *Customs* of his *Age* and *Country*; and should shew more Respect to so *venerable* a Piece of *Antiquity*, than to charge it with *want* of *Sense*, because we did not understand every minute Circumstance: We should likewise agree, that there were evidently *four Persons* concern'd in the Story; The *Man*, the *Woman*, the *Person* represented by the *Serpent*, and *God*: Disagree we could not about their several Parts. The *Serpent* is evidently the

F Tempter;

Tempter; the *Man* and the *Woman* the *Offenders*; *God* the *Judge* of all Three : The *Punishments* inflicted on the *Man* and *Woman* have no obscurity in them; and as to the *Serpent's Sentence*, we should think it reasonable to give it such a Sense as the whole Series of the Story requires.

'Tis no unreasonable Thing surely to demand the same Equity of you in interpreting the Sense of *Moses*, as you would certainly use towards any other antient Writer. And if the same Equity be allow'd, This *plain Fact* undeniably arises from the History: " That Man was
 " tempted to Disobedience, and did dis-
 " obey, and forfeited all Title to Happi-
 " ness, and to Life itself; that God judged
 " *him*, and the *Deceiver* likewise under
 " the *Form* of a *Serpent*." We require no more; and will proceed upon this Fact to consider the Prophecy before us.

The Prophecy is Part of the Sentence passed upon the Deceiver; the Words are these: *I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed; It shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel:*

Gen. iii. 15. Christian Writers apply this to our Blessed Saviour, emphatically styled here *the Seed of the Woman*, and who came in the Fullness of Time to *bruise the Serpent's Head* by destroying the Works of the Devil, and restoring those to the Liberty of the Sons of God, who were held under the Bondage and Captivity of Sin. You'll say, What unreasonable Liberty of Interpretation is this? Tell us, by what Rules of Language, *the Seed of the Woman* is made to denote *one* particular *Person*, and by what Art you discover the Mystery of *Christ's* miraculous Conception and Birth in this common Expression? Tell us likewise, how bruising the Serpent's Head comes to signify the destroying the Power of Sin, and the Redemption of Mankind by *Christ*? 'Tis no Wonder to hear such Questions from those who look no further than to the third Chapter of *Genesis*, to see the Ground of the Christian Application, As the Prophecy stands *there*, nothing appears to point out this particular Meaning; much less to confine the Prophecy to it. But of this hereafter.

Let us for the present lay aside all our own Notions, and go back to that State and Condition of Things, which was at the Time of the Delivery of this Prophecy ; and see (if haply we may discover it) what God intended to discover at that Time by this Prophecy, and what we may reasonably suppose our first Parents understood it to mean.

They were now in a State of Sin, standing before God to receive Sentence for their Disobedience, and had Reason to expect a full Execution of the Penalty threatned, *In the Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* But God came in Mercy as well as Judgment, purposing not only to punish, but to restore Man. The Judgment is awful and severe ; the Woman is doom'd to Sorrow in Conception ; the Man to Sorrow and Travel all the Days of his Life ; the Ground is cursed for his Sake ; and the End of the Judgment is, *Dust thou art, and to Dust thou shalt return.* Had they been left thus, they might have continued in their Labour and Sorrow for their appointed Time, and at last return-
ed

ed to Dust, without any well-grounded Hope or Confidence in God : They must have looked upon themselves as rejected by their Maker, delivered up to Trouble and Sorrow in this World, and as having no Hope in any other. Upon this Foot, I conceive there could have been no Religion left in the World ; for a Sense of Religion without Hope is a State of Phrenzy and Distraction, void of all Inducements to Love and Obedience, or any Thing else that is praise-worthy. If therefore God intended to preserve them as Objects of Mercy, it was absolutely necessary to communicate *so much Hope* to them, as might be a *rational Foundation* for their future Endeavours to reconcile themselves to him by a better Obedience. This seems to be the *primary* Intention of this first divine Prophecy ; and it was necessary to the State of the World, and the Condition of Religion, which could not possibly have been supported without the Communication of such Hopes. The Prophecy is excellently adapted to this Purpose, and manifestly conveyed such Hopes to our first Pa-

rents. For let us consider in what Sense we may suppose them to understand this Prophecy. Now they must necessarily understand the Prophecy, either according to the literal Meaning of the Words, or according to such Meaning as the whole Circumstance of the Transaction, of which they are a Part, does require. If we suppose them to understand the Words literally; and that God meant them so to be understood, this Passage must appear ridiculous. Do but imagine that you see *God* coming to *judge* the Offenders; *Adam* and *Eve* before him in the *utmost Distress*; that you hear *God* inflicting *Pains* and *Sorrows* and *Misery* and *Death* upon the First of human Race; and that in the Midst of all this Scene of Woe and great Calamity, you hear *God* foretelling with great *Solemnity* a *very trivial* Accident that should sometimes happen in the World: That Serpents would be apt to bite Men by the Heels, and that Men would be apt to revenge themselves by striking them on the Head. What has *this Trifle* to do with the *Loss of Mankind*, with the *Corruption* of the
natural

natural and *moral* World, and the *Ruin* of all the *Glory* and *Happiness* of the Creation? Great Comfort it was to *Adam*, doubtless, after telling him that his Days should be short and full of *Misery*, and his End without Hope, to let him know, that he should now and then knock a Snake on the Head, but not even that, without paying dear for his poor Victory, for the Snake should often bite him by the Heel. *Adam*, surely, could not understand the Prophecy in this Sense, tho' some of his Sons have so understood it; a plain Indication how much more some Men are concerned to maintain a literal Interpretation of Scripture, than they are to make it speak common Sense. Leaving this therefore as absolutely absurd and ridiculous, let us consider what Meaning the Circumstances of the Transaction do necessarily fix to the Words of this Prophecy. *Adam* tempted by his Wife, and she by the Serpent, had fallen from their Obedience, and were now in the Presence of God expecting Judgment. They knew full well at this Juncture, that their *Fall* was the *Victory*

of the *Serpent*, whom by Experience they found to be an *Enemy to God* and to *Man*; to *Man*, whom he had *ruined* by seducing him to Sin; to *God*, the noblest Work of whose Creation he had defaced. It could not therefore but be some Comfort to them to hear the *Serpent* first condemned, and to see that, however he had prevailed against them, he had gained no Victory over their Maker, who was able to assert his own Honour, and to punish this great Author of Iniquity. By this Method of God's Proceeding they were secured from thinking that there was any evil Being equal to the Creator in Power and Dominion: An Opinion which gained Ground in After-times, thro' the Prevalency of Evil: And is, where it does prevail, destructive of all true Religion. The Condemnation therefore of the *Serpent* was the Maintenance of God's Supremacy; and that it was so understood, we have, if I mistake not, a very antient Testimony in the Book of *Job*: *With God is Strength and Wisdom, the Deceived and the Deceiver are his*: i. e. equally subject to his Command, *Job* xii. 16. The Belief of
 God's

God's supreme Dominion, which is the Foundation of all Religion, being thus preserved, it was still necessary to give them such Hopes as might make them capable of Religion toward God. These Hopes they cou'd not but conceive, when they heard from the Mouth of God that the Serpent's Victory was not a compleat Victory over even themselves; that they and their Posterity should be enabled to contest his Empire; and tho' they were to suffer much in the Struggle, yet finally they shou'd prevail and bruise the Serpent's Head, and deliver themselves from his Power and Dominion over them. What now cou'd they conceive this Conquest over the Serpent to mean? Is it not natural to expect that we shall recover that by Victory, which we lost by being defeated? They knew that the Enemy had subdued them by Sin, cou'd they then conceive Hopes of Victory otherwise than by Righteousness? They lost thro' Sin the Happiness of their Creation, could they expect less from the Return of Righteousness than the Recovery of the Blessings forfeited? What else but this cou'd they expect

expect? For the certain Knowledge they had of their Loss when the Serpent prevailed, could not but lead them to a clear Knowledge of what they shou'd regain by prevailing against the Serpent. The Language of this Prophecy is indeed in Part metaphorical, but 'tis a great Mistake to think that all Metaphors are of uncertain Signification; for the Design and Scope of the Speaker, with the Circumstances attending, create a fix'd and determinate Sense. Were it otherwise, there wou'd be no Certainty in any Language; all Languages, the *Eastern* more especially, abounding in Metaphors.

Let us now look back to our Subject, and see what Application we are to make of this Instance.

This Prophecy was to our first Parents but very obscure; it was, in the Phrase of St. *Peter*, but a Light shining in a dark Place: All that they cou'd certainly conclude from it was, that their Case was not desperate; that some Remedy, that some Deliverance from the Evil they were under would in Time appear; but *when*, or *where*, or by *what Means* they cou'd

cou'd not understand: Their own Sentence which return'd them back again to the Dust of the Earth made it difficult to apprehend what this Victory over the Serpent shou'd signify, or how they, who were shortly to be Dust and Ashes, shou'd be the better for it. But after all that can be urged upon this Head to set out the Obscurity of this Promise, I wou'd ask one Question, Was not this Promise or Prophecy, tho' furrounded with all this Obscurity, a Foundation for Religion and Trust and Confidence towards God after the Fall, in Hopes of Deliverance from the Evils introduced by Disobedience? If it was, it fully answered the Necessity of their Case, to whom it was given, and manifested to them all that God intended to make manifest. They cou'd have had towards God no Religion, without some Hopes of Mercy: It was necessary therefore to convey such Hopes; but to tell them how these Hopes shou'd be accomplished, at what Time and Manner precisely, was not necessary to their Religion. And what now is to be objected against this Prophecy? It is very obscure you say;

say; so it is; but 'tis obscure in the Points which God did not intend to explain at that time, and which were not necessary then to be known. You see a plain Reason for giving this Prophecy, and as far as the Reason for giving the Prophecy extends, so far the Prophecy is very plain: 'Tis obscure only, where there is no Reason why it shou'd be plain; which surely is a Fault easily to be forgiven, and very far from being a proper Subject for complaint.

But if this Prophecy conveyed to our first Parents only a general Hope and Expectation of Pardon and Restoration, and was intended by God to convey no more *to them*; How come we their Posterity to find so much more in this Promise than we suppose them to find? How is it that we pretend to discover *Christ* in this Prophecy, to see in it the Mystery of his Birth, his Sufferings, and his final Triumph over all the Powers of Darknes? By what new Light do we discern all these Secrets, by what Art do we unfold them?

'Tis no Wonder to me, that such as come to the Examination of the Prophecies

cies applied to *Christ*, expecting to find in each of them some express Character and Mark of *Christ*, plainly to be understood as such antecedently to his Coming, shou'd ask these, or many other the like Questions; or that the Argument from antient Prophecy shou'd appear so slight and trivial to those who know no better Use of it.

Known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning; and whatever Degree of Light he thought fit to communicate to our first Parents, or to their Children in After-times, there is no doubt, but that *He* had a perfect Knowledge at all Times of all the Methods by which he intended to rescue and restore Mankind. And therefore all the Notices given by him to Mankind of his intended Salvation, must correspond to the great Event whenever the Fullness of Time shall make it manifest. No Reason can be given why God shou'd at all Times, or at any Time clearly open the Secrets of his Providence to Men; it depends merely upon his good Pleasure to do it in what Time, and in what Manner he thinks proper. But there

is a necessary Reason to be given, why all such Notices as God thinks fit to give, shou'd answer exactly in due Time to the Completion of the great Design. It is absurd therefore to complain of the antient Prophecies for being obscure, for 'tis challenging God for not telling us more of his Secrets. But if we pretend that God has at length manifested to us by the Revelation of the Gospel, the Method of his Salvation, 'tis necessary for us to shew that all the Notices of this Salvation, given to the old World, do correspond to the Things which we have heard, and seen with our Eyes. The Argument from Prophecy therefore is not to be formed in this Manner. " All the
" antient Prophecies have expressly point-
" ed out and characterized *Christ Jesus*:" but it must be formed in this Manner:
" All the Notices which God gave to
" the Fathers of his intended Salvation
" are perfectly answered by the Coming
" of *Christ*:" He never promised or engaged his Word in any Particular relating to the common Salvation, but what he has fully made good by sending his

his Son to our Redemption. Let us try these Methods upon the Prophecy before us: If you demand that we shou'd shew you *à priori* *Christ Jesus* set forth in this Prophecy, and that God had limited himself by this Promise to convey the Blessing intended by sending his own Son in the Flesh, and by no other Means whatever: You demand, what I cannot shew, nor do I know, who can. But if you enquire, whether this Prophecy in the obvious and most natural Meaning of it, in that Sense in which our first Parents, and their Children after, might easily understand it, has been verified by the Coming of *Christ*, I conceive it may be made as clear as the Sun at Noon-day, that all the Expectation raised by this Prophecy has been completely answered by the Redemption wrought by *Christ Jesus*. And what have you to desire more than to see a Prophecy fulfilled exactly? If you insist that the Prophecy shou'd have been more express; you must demand of God why he gave you no more Light; but you ought at least to suspend

suspend this Demand, till you have a Reason to shew for it.

I know that this Prophecy is urged further, and that Christian Writers argue from the Expressions of it to shew that *Christ* is therein particularly foretold: He properly is the *Seed of a Woman* in a Sense in which no other ever was; his Sufferings were well prefigured by *the Bruising of the Heel*, his complete Victory over Sin and Death, by *Bruising the Serpent's Head*. When Unbelievers hear such Reasonings they think themselves entitled to laugh; but their Scorn be to themselves. We readily allow that the Expressions do not imply necessarily this Sense; we allow further, that there is no Appearance that our first Parents understood them in this Sense; or that God intended they shou'd so understand them: But since this Prophecy has been plainly fulfilled in *Christ*, and by the Event appropriated to him only; I wou'd fain know how it comes to be conceived to be so ridiculous a Thing in us, to suppose that God, to whom the whole Event

was

was known from the beginning, (†) should make Choice of such Expressions, as naturally conveyed so much knowledge as he intended to convey to our first Parents, and yet should appear in the Fullness of Time to have been peculiarly adapted to the Event which he from the beginning saw, and which he intended the World should one Day see; and which when they should see, they might the more easily acknowledge to be the Work of his Hand, by the secret Evidence which he had inclos'd from the Days of old in the Words of Prophecy. However the Wit of Man may despise this Method, yet is there nothing in it unbecoming the Wisdom of God. And when we see this to be the Case, not only in this Instance, but in many other Prophecies of the old Testament, 'tis not with-

(†) *Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else, I am God, and there is none like me: Declaring the End from the Beginning, and from antient Times the Things that are not yet done; saying, My Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure, Isa. xlv. 9. 10.*

The Works of the Lord are done in Judgment from the Beginning: And from the Time he made them, he disposed the Parts thereof, Eccles. xvi. 26.

out Reason we conclude, that under the Obscurity of antient Prophecy there was an Evidence of God's Truth kept in Reserve to be made manifest in due Time.

As this Prophecy is the first, so it is the only considerable one, in which we have any Concern, from the Creation to the Days of *Noah*. What has been discoursed therefore upon this Occasion, may be understood as an Account of the first Period of Prophecy. Under this Period the Light of Prophecy was proportioned to the Wants and Necessities of the World, and sufficient to maintain Religion after the Fall of Man, by affording sufficient Grounds for Trust and Confidence in God; without which Grounds, which could then no otherways be had but by Promise from God, Religion could not have been supported in the World. This Prophecy was the grand Charter of God's Mercy after the Fall; Nature had no certain Help for Sinners liable to Condemnation; her Right was lost with her Innocence: It was necessary therefore either to destroy the Offenders, or to save them by raising them to a Capacity of
Salva-

Salvation, by giving them such Hopes as might enable them to exercise a reasonable Religion. So far the Light of Prophecy extended. By what Means God intended to work his Salvation, he did not expressly declare; and who has Right to complain that he did not; or to prescribe to him Rules in dispensing his Mercy to the Children of Men? This Prophecy, we, upon whom the later Days are come, have seen fully verify'd; more fully than those to whom it was delivered could perhaps conceive. View this Prophecy then, with respect to those to whom it was given, it answered their Want and the immediate End proposed by God; view it with respect to ourselves, and it answers our's; and shall we still complain of its Obscurity?

The bringing in of *Prophecy* was not the only Change in the State of Religion occasioned by the Fall. *Sacrifice* came in at the same Time, as appears by the Course of the History; and it is hardly possible it should come in, especially at the Time it did, any otherwise than upon the Authority of divine Institution.

It is the first *Act* of *Religion* mentioned in the sacred Story to be *accepted* by God; which implies strongly that it was of his own Appointment; for we can hardly suppose that such a Mark of Distinction would have been set upon a mere *humane* Invention. In later Times, when the Account of Things grows clearer, Sacrifice appears to be appointed by God as an *Expiation* for *Sin*; and we have no Reason to imagine that it was turned aside from its original Use. There is indeed no express Declaration of the *Use* of *Sacrifice* in Religion at its first Appearance, and yet something there seems to be in the Account that may give Light in this matter: We read that *Cain* brought an *Offering of the Fruit of the Ground*, and *Abel* of the *Firstlings of his Flock*, and the *Fat thereof*: *The Lord had Respect unto Abel and to his Offering; but unto Cain and to his Offering he had not Respect*. Allowing the Maxim of the *Jewish* Church to have been good from the first Institution of Sacrifice, *That without Blood there is no Remission*, the Case may possibly be this;

Abel

Abel came a Petitioner for Grace and Pardon, and brought the *Atonement* appointed for Sin; *Cain* appears before God as a *just Person wanting no Repentance*, he brings an *Offering* in Acknowledgment of God's Goodness and Bounty, but no *Atonement* in Acknowledgment of his own Wretchedness. The Expostulation of God with *Cain* favours this Account; *If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou dost not well, Sin lieth at thy Door*: i. e. If thou art righteous thy Righteousness shall save thee; if thou art not, by what Expiation is thy Sin purged? It lieth still at thy Door. Add to this, that the Apostle to the *Hebrews* says, that *Abel's Sacrifice* was rendered excellent by *Faith*: What could this Faith be, but a Reliance on the Promises and Appointments of God? Which Faith *Cain* wanted, relying on his own Well doing.

If you admit this Interpretation, it plainly shews that the true Religion instituted by God has been *one* and the *same* from the Fall of *Adam*, subsisting ever upon the *same Principles* of Faith; at

first upon only *general* and *obscure Hopes*, which were gradually opened and unfolded in every Age, till the better Days came, when God thought good to call us into the *marvellous Light of his Gospel*.

This Piece of History is all the Account we have of the Religion of the ante-diluvian World: It was proper to be considered for the Relation there is between Prophecy and the State of Religion in the World; and for this Reason also, that Sacrifice may be found to be one kind of Prophecy, or Representation of the one great Sacrifice once offered for the Sins of the World.





DISCOURSE IV.



WE have seen the Beginning of Prophecy, and its first Entrance into the World, and what Measure of Light and Hope it brought with it. The next Enquiry is, to examine by what Degrees this *Promise* was *opened* and *unfolded* in the succeeding Ages of the World; and to trace the Methods of divine Providence in preparing all things for its Accomplishment.

If we consider the first Prophecy as the Foundation of those Hopes, in which all the Sons of *Adam* have an interest; in which the Ages yet to come, as well as the present and those already past, are concerned; we shall not wonder to find

that the Administrations of Providence have had in all Ages relation to this Prophecy, and shall have, till the End of all things brings with it the appointed Time for the full Accomplishment.

One thing, I presume, will be easily granted because it cannot be easily deny'd; that if the antient Prophecies which concern the general State and Condition of Man with regard either to this World or the next, are indeed *divine* Oracles, there must be a Consistency in the whole; and how dark or obscure soever some Part of them might be at the first Delivery, and for Generations afterwards, yet must they in the Event conspire and centre in that great End which was always in the View of Providence: *Known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning of the World*, Acts xv. 18.

Taking then this prophecy to contain the Purpose of God with respect to Mankind; the Administrations of Providence, together with such further Declarations as God thought fit to make, must needs be the best Comment to help us to its Meaning.

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The Account we have of the antediluvian World is very short, and conveys but little Knowledge to us of the Religion of those Times, or of the Hopes and Expectations then entertained: Yet something there is to shew that the Curse of the Fall was remember'd and felt during that Period; and that those who preserved a Sense of Religion, had an Expectation of being delivered from the Curse; which could be ground-ed, as far as appears, upon nothing but the Prophecy already mention'd.

Noah was born in the eleventh Century after the Fall, and at the Time of his Birth, his Father *Lamech*, by the Spirit of Prophecy, declared, *This same shall comfort us concerning our Work and Toil of our Hands, because of the Ground which the Lord hath cursed*, Gen. v. 19.

This Passage is a very material one, and, consider'd in all its Views, will give some Light to the State and Condition of the World during this Period. We may, I think, from hence fairly collect;
1. That the Curse upon the Ground subsisted in all its Rigour to the Days
of

of *Lamech*; and that the Work and Toil necessary to raise from the Ground a sufficient Support for Life, was a grievous and irksome Burden. There is no reason to imagine, but that *Lamech* had as good a Share of the Things of the World as any other in his Time; and yet he speaks of the Labour and Toil of Life, much more like a Man reporting what he had *felt*, than what he had *only seen*.

2. That there was an Expectation in his Time, at least among those who had not quite forgot God, of a Deliverance from the Curse of the Fall. *Lamech's* Prophecy does not introduce this Expectation, but is grounded upon it: He seems to speak to such as had the same common Hope with himself of a Deliverance to come; and points out to them *the Child* then born as the Instrument designed by Providence to ease them of their Burden. *THIS SAME shall comfort us: i. e.* This is the *Seed* of the *Woman*, the *Heir* of the *Promise*, the Effect of which shall be seen in his Time.

3. That the ancient Expectation, founded on the Prophecy given at the Fall, was not of an
immediate

immediate and sudden Deliverance. Above a thousand Years were passed from the Curse to the Birth of *Noah*, and yet the Expectation of Deliverance continued; whereas, had the Notion been, that the Prophecy was to be immediately fulfilled, the Delay had been long enough to tire out their Patience and their Hopes. 4. That the antient Expectation was not that the World should be delivered *all at once* from the *whole* Curse of the Fall. *Lamech*, who so well remember'd the Lord's *Curse* upon the *Ground*, cannot be supposed to forget the *greater Curse* upon *Man*: *Dust thou art, and to Dust thou shalt return.* And yet from *this Part* of the Curse he gives no Hopes of Deliverance; *Noah* was not that Seed, who should bring *Life* and *Immortality* to *Light*; of him he only foretells, that he should *save* them from the *Labour and Toil of their Hands*; and leaves the Hopes of Deliverance from the *greater Curse* to stand as they did, upon the Faith of the first Prophecy. This Notion of a *gradual* Deliverance from the old Curse is agreeable to all that has happened

happened since, and to the present State of Things under the Gospel: It is frequently to be met with in the inspir'd Writers, particularly in *St. Paul*, who tells us, *THE LAST Enemy that shall be destroyed is Death.*

In Consequence of this Exposition of the Prediction of *Lamech*, it must be maintain'd, that the Prophecy has been verify'd in the Event: That the Earth has been restored from the Curse laid on it at the Fall, and now enjoys the Effect of the Blessing bestowed on *Noah*. There will arise many Prejudices, I am sensible, against this Notion now advanced. In the first Place, the Prophecy which was given at the Fall, has been usually appropriated to *Christ Jesus*, and to the Deliverance we expect from him by the Restauration of Life and Immortality; and it may be thought perhaps no good Service to give any other Person a Share in this Prophecy.

In answer to this, I have some few Observations to offer. 1. That the *Curse* of the *Fall* manifestly consists of several Parts: Man was doom'd to a Life of

Labour and Sorrow here, the Ground cursed for his Sake, and he condemned to seek his Food in the Sweat of his Brow ; and after this Life ended he was sentenced to return to the Dust from whence he was taken. 2. The Prophecy given as a Support to Man under this Curse mentions no kind of Deliverance particularly, but conveys a general Hope ; which is limited to no one Circumstance of the Curse more than another ; and is therefore naturally understood to relate to the Whole. 3. Should there appear reason sufficient to induce us to think that this Prophecy has already, in Part, had its Completion, and that *one Part* of the *Curse* has been already removed ; it will be so far from weakening, that it will mightily support and strengthen our Hopes of seeing the Whole removed in God's own Time. 4. It ought to be no Objection, that this Prophecy is supposed to point out more Events, or more Persons than one. This is according to the Analogy of antient Prophecies. And why may not this Prophecy mean *Noah* and *Christ*, as well as many others mean *David*

David and Christ, Solomon and Christ, &c?

Another Prejudice will arise from the common Notion of the present and past State of the Earth. Instead of seeing any Alteration for the better, according to the Prophecy of *Lamech*, Men think they see an Alteration for the worse in every Age: Nature seems to them to be almost spent and worn out, and less able to provide for her Children now than formerly. These are the Sentiments of the present Age, and they were so of those past: We meet with many Reflexions of this Kind in grave and serious Authors: *St. Cyprian*, I remember, complains that Things were sensibly grown worse even in the Compass of his own Time; That the Seasons of the Year were not so pleasant, nor the Fruits of the Earth so delightful and refreshing as he remembered them. I wonder not at his Judgment; for I find myself every Day growing into the same Opinion. The best and the choicest Fruits served up at the Tables of the Great, have no such Relish as those, which they once provided for themselves

themselves when they were young: And many there are who can now find but few Days good enough to be abroad, who yet can remember when there were few bad enough to keep them at home. Such observations therefore as these shew how much men alter themselves; but they shew nothing else.

But this Prejudice has a greater Support from antient Tradition: We read of a *Golden Age* when Peace and Plenty reigned, when Fraud and Violence were little known. The old Writers to whom we are indebted for this Piece of Knowledge, set off the Story by mixing with it great Complaints of their own Times; that *Iron Age*, as they call it, in which they lived. From these Authorities many have been led to think that the *Curse* upon the Earth has been ever growing and shall grow till the End of all Things.

But it ought to be considered, that the most antient Writers, to whom we are beholden for these Accounts, lived at such a Distance of Time from the Flood, that we may very well suppose that they had little Knowledge of any Antiquity beyond

it. They might well call the Times soon after the Flood antient Times, for so they were with respect to their own; and there is no Pretence for thinking that they knew any thing of the Manner of Living before the Flood. They might possibly have some obscure Tradition of the Paradisiacal State; but if they had, they confounded it with their Golden Age, which plainly was a very different Thing. Now the Ages next the Flood afforded ground enough for this antient Tradition, without supposing any such Alterations in the State of the Earth as are commonly imagined. The Earth was in a poor Condition indeed after the Flood, if it cou'd not afford Plenty for the few Inhabitants; and what Occasion was there for Fraud and Violence when every Man had more than enough? When Men encreased and the Earth was divided in Property, the Case altered; some had more than enough, and some much less, and every Man grew concerned to be rich, and applied to the Arts of Fraud, or to open Violence, as they best served his Purpose. Here then is
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the *Golden Age*; and here is the *Iron Age*. The first happy State continued even to *Abraham's* Time; He and *Lot* were Strangers in the Land of *Canaan*, they had great Flocks and Herds with them; and yet what Plenty did they enjoy? When their Servants quarrelled about some Conveniencies in feeding their Cattle, *Abraham*, as if he had been Lord of the whole Soil, offers *Lot* his Choice of the Country for his Cattle. *Is not the whole Land before thee — If thou wilt take the left Hand, then will I go to the right; or if thou depart to the right Hand, then I will go to the left.* Such a Dispute in these Days wou'd be attended probably with Strife and Violence, with Fraud and Deceit, and perpetual Feuds and Animofities between the contending Parties: in *Abraham's* Time the very Plenty the World enjoyed put an end to the Quarrel; not that the World is worse now than it was antiently, but Men are now so multiplied, and the Earth so divided and settled in Property, that private Men are not left to their Choice to settle where they please. Some small Parts of the

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Earth, lying near Towns, and Places of Habitation, were in *Abraham's* Time possessed in Property, as we learn from the Purchase which he made of a Burying-place. But he was no purchaser or Proprietor of the Country where he fed his Cattle, and yet he met with no Disturbance.

Setting aside therefore these Prejudices, let us examine what the Truth of the Case is according to the best Light now remaining.

If you consult Interpreters for the Meaning of *Lamech's* Prediction; some will tell you that *Noah* found out proper Tools and Instruments of Husbandry, which was a great Abatement to the Labour and Toil of Tillage: But of this there is no Proof; and 'tis much more likely, that a Descendent of *Cain's* was the Inventor of such Tools, than that *Noah* was. We read nothing of *Noah's* Skill in this way; but we read of *Tubal Cain*, that he was an *Instructor of every Artificer in Brass and Iron*: And can it be imagined that there were Artificers in *Iron* so early as *Tubal Cain*, and no Ap-
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plication of the Art to the Works of Husbandry till *Noah's* Time? Some will tell you, that *Noah* first invented the Art of making Wine; a Liquor that cheers the Heart, and makes Men forget Sorrow and Trouble; but neither for this is there any Proof. We read that after the Flood, he *began to be an Husbandman and planted a Vineyard*; but as he was not the *first Husbandman* in the World, so neither can it be concluded from hence that he was the *first Vine Dresser*.

Others are of Opinion that there is nothing prophetic in *Lamech's* Declaration, and that he had no View but to the Circumstances of his own Family. He rejoiced, they say, to see a Son born who might in time be assisting to him in the Toil of Cultivating the Ground. According to this Interpretation, *Noah* was so far from being marked out as the Person who shou'd alleviate the Labour and Toil of the World, that his Father rejoiced only that he was come to take his Share of it, and to be his Fellow-Labourer. But is there any thing in this, particular to *Noah*? Is not every Son born

to assist his Father? And may not *Lamech's* Words be applied by every Father at the Birth of every Son? Why then is this Speech reported of *Lamech* only? Why is a *peculiar* Name, with reference to this Declaration, given to *Noah*, if there was no *peculiar* Reason for it?

The *Jewish* Interpreters are generally agreed to expound the Words of *Lamech*, as importing a Deliverance to be granted from the Labour and Toil of Tillage; occasioned by the Curse on the Ground: And some of them suppose the Words to have a Regard to the Restoration of the World through *Noah* and his Sons. But the Scripture itself will be our best Guide in this Case, thither let us go.

Lamech foretells that his Son *Noah* shou'd comfort them concerning the Work and Toil of their Hands, because of the Ground which the Lord had cursed. When God informs *Noah* of his Design to destroy the World, he adds, *But with thee will I establish my Covenant.* *Lamech* expected in Virtue of God's Promise a Deliverance from the Curse of the Earth, and foresees that the Deliverance

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wou'd come through his Son. When God threatens to destroy the Earth and complete the Curse he had laid on it, he thinks upon his Covenant, and promises *Noah* the Benefit of it: What Covenant was this that had such immediate relation to the Destruction of the World? What cou'd it be but the very Promise which *Lamech* saw shou'd be made good to *Noah*; and which is here actually conveyed to *Noah* by a new Promise? The Words; *I will establish my Covenant*, must relate to a Covenant then subsisting, and not to a Covenant afterwards to be made; as will be evident to those who will examine the Import of this Phrase in Scripture. But to proceed;

The Flood being over, God declares, *I will not again Curse the Ground any more for Man's sake*. It appears from this Declaration, 1. That the Flood was the Effect of that Curse which was denounced against the Earth for Man's sake. 2. That the *old* Curse was fully executed and accomplished in the Flood. In Consequence of which Discharge from the Curse, a *new* Blessing is immediately pro-

nounced upon the Earth; *While the Earth remaineth, Seed-time and Harvest, and Cold and Heat, and Summer and Winter, and Day and Night shall not cease*, Gen. viii. 22. This is called a *Covenant* between God and the Earth; Ch. ix, v. 13. And a Covenant with Noah and his Seed, and with every living Creature, of the Fowl, of the Cattle, and of every Beast of the Field, v. 8, 9, 10. and in Truth a Blessing on the Earth, is properly a Blessing not only on Man, but on all living Creatures which subsist on the Earth: and tis with Respect to this first Covenant that the *Psalmist* breaks forth into the Admiration of God's Goodness. *Thy Mercy, O Lord, is in the Heavens, and thy Faithfulness reacheth unto the Clouds. Thy Righteousness is like the great Mountains, thy Judgments are a great Deep: O Lord, thou preservest MAN and BEAST!* Psal. xxxvi. 5, 6.

When *Adam* was first formed and placed on the Earth, he had several Blessings and Privileges conferred on him by God. These were forfeited by the Fall. What will you say if you see these very Blessings

sings restored again to *Noah* and his Posterity after the Flood? Whether this be the Case or no, will soon appear upon a Comparison of the Blessings given to *one* and the *other*. To *Adam* and *Eve* God said; *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the Earth*: Gen. i. 28. To *Noah* and his Sons he says, *Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the Earth*. Gen. ix. 1. To our first Parent it is said; *Have Dominion over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and over every living Thing that moveth on the Earth*: Gen. i. 28. To *Noah* and his Sons it is said; *The Fear of you, and the Dread of you, shall be upon every Beast of the Earth, and upon every Fowl of the Air, and upon all that moveth upon the Earth, and upon all Fishes of the Sea; into your Hand are they delivered*. Gen. ix. 2.

To *Adam* and *Eve* are granted for Food, every Herb bearing Seed — and every Tree, in the which is the Fruit of a Tree yielding Seed: Gen. i. 29. *Noah* and his Sons have a larger Charter — Every moving Thing that liveth shall be Meat for you, even as the green Herb, have I

given you all Things. Gen. ix. 3. The Blessing upon the Earth at the Creation was; *Let the Earth bring forth Grass, and Herb yielding Seed, and the Fruit Tree yielding Fruit after his Kind, whose Seed is in itself upon the Earth:* Gen. i. 11. The Blessing after the Flood is; *While the Earth remaineth, Seed time and Harvest shall not cease.* Gen. viii. 22. In the Beginning, *The Lights in the Firmament were appointed to divide the Day from the Night, and to be—for Seasons, and for Days and Years:* Gen. i. 14. After the Flood the new Blessing is, *That Cold and Heat, and Summer and Winter, and Day and Night shall not cease.* Gen. viii. 22. Tell me now what is there bestowed in the first Blessings, that is wanting in the Second? What more did *Adam* enjoy in his happiest Days, what more did he forfeit in his worst, with respect to this Life, than what is contain'd in these Blessings? If he neither had more, nor lost more, all these Blessings you see expressly restored to *Noah* and his Posterity; and can you still believe that the Curse upon the Earth remains?

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All this laid together amounts, I think, to this; That the old Curse upon the Ground was finished and completed at the Deluge. And when the whole Race of Men, eight only excepted, were destroyed, the Serpent had sufficiently bruised the Heel of the Woman's Seed; and the Time was come to relieve the World with respect to this Part of the Curse so fully executed; accordingly a Blessing is *once more* pronounced on the Earth; and a Covenant of temporal Prosperity confirmed to *Noah*, and by him to all Mankind; making good the Prophecy of his Father at the Time of his Birth; *This same shall comfort us, &c.*

You may think perhaps that we see but little Effect of this *new* Blessing; that the Life of Man is still Labour and Toil; that he still eats the Bread of Sorrow and Carefulness in the Sweat of his Brow; and that the Earth still abounds in Thorns and Thistles. Such Complaints as these are but the Effect of Prejudice: Men speak in this Case, as if they thought there were no Thorns and Thistles till after the Fall, but that they were created
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on Purpose to be a Curse; for if there were such things (as undoubtedly there were) before the Fall, why should you expect to have them removed by the Restoration of the Earth?

For what Employment do you imagine Man was made? For *a little Sleep, a little slumber, and a little folding of the Hands to sleep?* Surely this was not the Case: Even in Paradise, it was *Adam's* Business to dress and to keep the Garden, how much Labour this required we cannot tell; some it required without doubt. After the Fall, Labour increased and multiplied, and continued to be very burdensome unto the Time of the Flood: And God's Promise of regular Seasons after the Flood, seems to intimate that they were very irregular and confused before: Which one Circumstance will account for all the Change we suppose. What the Case was in the old World during the Curse, may probably be collected from the Curse denounced against *Israel* when disobedient: *I will break the Pride of their Power; and I will make your Heaven as Iron, and your Earth as Brass, and your*
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Strength shall be spent in vain: For your Land shall not yield her Increase, neither shall the Trees of the Land yield their Fruits, Levit. xxxvi. 19, 20.

There are serious Writers who think that the Earth was very much damaged and rendered less fertile by the Flood: But is it not obvious to observe, that this Judgment ought to be grounded on the Knowledge not only of the present State of the Earth, but also of the State before the Flood; for whoever compares two Things together, and judges upon that Comparison, must be supposed to know them both; and yet 'tis certain that we know nothing of the antediluvian State, but this only, that it was a very bad one; which is not enough to support us in judging, that the present State is a much worse.

We meet with frequent Allusions to this Covenant with *Noah* in later Times, and later Books of Scripture: The Son of *Sirach* tells us, *That an everlasting Covenant was made with him*, xliv. 18. *Ἀετῆνας αἰῶν* (Gr.) *Testamenta Seculi*, (Vulg.) *The Covenant of the Age* was given

en him: For *Noah* was the *Father* of the *Age*, and had the *Covenant* of the *Age* after the Flood, in like manner as *Christ* was the *Father*, and brought in the *new Covenant* of the succeeding *Age*.

The Prophet *Jeremiah* introduces God appealing to his own Fidelity in the Execution of this first Covenant, as a Reason why he ought to be trusted and relied on for the Performance of the Second. *If you can break my Covenant of the Day, and my Covenant of the Night, — then may also my Covenant be broken with David my Servant, that he should not have a Son to reign upon his Throne, xxxiii. 20, 21. and x 25.* In like manner the Prophet *Isaiah*, *This is as the Waters of Noah unto me: For as I have sworn that the Waters of Noah should no more go over the Earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee, liv. 9.* The *lxvth Psalm* seems to be a Comment upon God's Covenant with *Noah*: *Thou makest the Outgoings of the Morning and Evening to rejoice. Thou visitest the Earth, and waterest it: — Thou crownest the Year with thy Goodness,*

ness, and thy Paths drop Fatness. — The Pastures are cloathed with Flocks; the Vallies also are covered over with Corn; they shout for Joy, they also sing. It seems also to be with reference to this Covenant that the *Psalmist* appeals to God's *Faithfulness in the Clouds*, to his *Mercy establish'd in the Heavens*, and to the *Moon the faithful Witness in Heaven*. Wisdom and Power and Goodness are shewn forth in the Creation, but *Mercy and Faithfulness* relate to God's Dealings with Men: and when we hear of his *Faithfulness in the Clouds*, it naturally leads us to think of his Promise for *Seed-time and Harvest*, for the *former* and the *latter Rain*; Things evidently depending upon the *Government of the Clouds*.

During the *Age* of this Covenant, the Character by which God was known, and applyed to, was relative to this Covenant, and the Blessings of it; — *Unto God wou'd I commit my Cause, which doth great Things and unsearchable; marvelous Things without Number; who giveth Rain upon the Earth, and sendeth Waters*

Waters upon the Fields, Job v. 8, 9, 10. Sing Praise upon the Harp unto our God, who covereth the Heaven with Clouds, who prepareth Rain for the Earth, who maketh Grass to grow upon the Mountains. He giveth to the Beast his Food, and to the young Ravens which cry, Psalm cxlvii. 7, 8, 9. — Let us now fear the Lord our God that giveth Rain, both the former and the latter in his Season: He reserveth unto us the appointed Weeks of the Harvest Jer. v. 24. To the same Purpose and with respect to the same Times the Apostles Paul and Barnabas tell the People at Lystra, That God in Times past suffered all Nations to walk in their own Ways, nevertheless he left not himself without Witness, in that he did good, and gave us Rain and fruitful Seasons filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness, Acts xvi. 17. Our blessed Saviour does likewise commend and extol the Mercy of God in the Works of this first Covenant: He maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust. Which Words are directly a Com-
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ment upon the Terms of *Noah's* Covenant for fruitful Seasons, which were to continue without being interrupted again for the sake of Man's Iniquity; or as the Text it self expresses it, *Though the Imagination of Man's Heart is evil from his Youth*, Gen. viii. 21. With Respect to this Covenant of temporal Blessings given to *Noah*, and to the second Covenant of future Glory given to *Christ*, must *St. Paul* be understood to speak, when he says; *Godliness is profitable to all things, having Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come*. In any other View the Words are capable of no Exposition consistent with Experience; or with the Admonitions of the Gospel, which warn the Righteous to expect Sufferings in this World: But true it is, that for Godliness sake *the Promise of the Life that now is* was confirmed with *Noah*; and for the same Reason was the Covenant of better Hopes confirmed with *Christ*.

These Allusions, and many more, suppose a Restoration of the Earth after the Flood, and a new Blessing given to it in

virtue of God's Covenant; and without this Supposition I know not how to account for some Passages in Scripture which speak of the Goodness of the Earth, and the great Plenty it affords. How comes it to pass that *this very Earth* cursed with Barrenness, and to be a Nursery for Thorns and Thistles, is afterwards represented as flowing with Milk and Honey, abounding with Oil and Wine, and every thing usefull and pleasant in Life? Can you imagine this Land of Plenty to be Part of the cursed Earth, doom'd to bear Thorns and Thistles, and to weary out its inhabitants with Toil and Labour? Yet this is the Case, if no Alteration has happened; and it will be no easy Work to reconcile these Contradictions. But if the Curse upon the Earth was expiated at the Flood; if the Earth has been *once more blessed* by its Creator, there wants no Art or Invention to solve this Difficulty: The Thing speaks for it self.

I will leave this Point upon these Reasons: whether they are sufficient to establish an Opinion so contrary to the Prejudices of Mankind, I know not; they seem

seem to me at least to be worth considering.

Let us consider now the State of Prophecy after the Flood, and upon what Foot the Religion of the new World subsisted.

I find no new Prophecy given to *Noah* after the Flood, nor to any of his Children till the Call of *Abraham*. The Reason of it seems to be this; the Power and Sovereignty of God were so manifestly displayed in the Deluge, and made so strong Impressions upon the few Persons then alive, and came so well attested to the succeeding Generation, that Religion wanted no other Support: When Idolatry prevailed, and the World was in Danger of being quite lost to true Religion, without the Interposition of God, the Word of Prophecy was renewed; as we shall find when we come to that Period.

It may seem surprising perhaps, that after so great a Revolution in the World, as the Deluge made, God should say nothing to the Remnant of Mankind, of the Punishments and Rewards of another
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Life; but shou'd make a new Covenant with them relating merely to fruitful Seasons, and the Blessings of the Earth. All that I can say to this Difficulty, is this; I think I see plainly, a gradual working of Providence towards the Redemption of the World from the Curse of the Fall; that the temporal Blessings were first restored, as an Earnest and Pledge of better Things to follow; that the *Covenant of the Age* given to *Noah* had, strictly speaking, nothing to do with the Hopes of Futurity, which were reserved to be the Matter of *another Covenant*, in *another Age*, and to be revealed by him, whose Province it was *to bring Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel*.

The Law of *Moses*, though a divine Revelation, and introduced to serve and advance the great Ends of Providence with respect to Mankind, yet being given in the *Age* of the first Covenant, was in all Things made conformable to it; and was founded in no other *express* Promises, than those of temporal Happiness and Prosperity; in no other *express* Threatnings, than those of temporal Loss
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and Misery. *Abraham's* temporal Covenant was the same in kind with *Noah's*, though much enlarged and re-established upon further Promises and Assurances : As the Curse upon the Ground for the Wickedness of *Cain*, was of the very same kind with the Curse of the Fall; differing from it not in Kind but in Degree.

But though the first Covenant given to *Noah*, and the Law of *Moses* founded upon the Terms of that Covenant, contain no express Promises of future Rewards, yet is it not to be imagined that all who lived under this Covenant were void of such Hopes, and Expectations. If there were any such Hopes before the Flood, grounded upon the Prophecy consequent to the Fall, the coming in of the Flood could not destroy them; and the Covenant of temporal Blessings given to *Noah* was so far from superseding better Hopes, that it did mightily strengthen and confirm them. For if *Noah* and his Forefathers expected Deliverance from the whole Curse of the Fall, the actual Deliverance from one Part of it was a

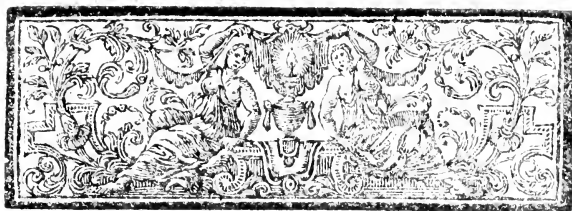
very good Pledge of a further Deliverance to be expected in due Time. Man himself was curſed, as well as the Ground; he was doom'd to return to Duſt; and fruitful Seaſons are but a ſmall Relief, compared to the Greatneſs of his Loſs; but when fruitful Seaſons came, and one Part of the Curſe was evidently abated, it gave great Assurance that the other ſhould not laſt for ever.

That *Noah* had ſuch Expectations himſelf, and tranſmitted them to his Poſterity ſeems evident from the peculiar Bleſſing which he beſtows on *Shem*. *Bleſſed*, ſays he, *be the Lord God of Shem: Canaan ſhall be his Servant. God ſhall enlarge Japhet, and he ſhall dwell in the Tents of Shem.* Gen. ix. 26, 27. Why the God of *Shem*, and not the God of *Japhet*? As to the Behaviour of theſe two Sons toward their Father it was the ſame; they joined in the pious Office done to him; in this reſpect then they were equal, and equally deſerving of a Bleſſing; if any Preference was due to either from the Father, it was to *Japhet* his Firſt-born; for ſo he was, though commonly laſt named
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when the Sons of *Noah* are mentioned together. This being the Case, how comes *Shem* to be preferr'd? And what is the Blessing convey'd to him? The temporal Covenant it could not be, for that was before confirmed with *all* the Sons of *Noah*. Day and Night, Summer and Winter, Seed-time and Harvest, were a common Gift to the World, bestowed, as our blessed Lord observes, *on the Evil as well as on the Good*. The Blessing therefore peculiar to *Shem* was no Part of the temporal Covenant; nor was it any thing in the Power of his Father to bestow; for then his elder Brother, equally obedient and respectful to his Father, must have been served before him. Of what other Blessing *Noah* had any notion, can never be imagined, unless we seek for it among the Hopes he conceived of further Deliverance from the Curse, grounded upon the divine Promise that the *Seed of the Woman* should finally prevail; the Right to which Promise was conveyed to him before the Flood, *With thee will I establish my Covenant*. Gen. vi. 18. For *Noah* had, not only the

temporal Covenant given to him and his Sons, but he was also, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* tells us, *Heir of the Righteousness which is by Faith*, ch. xi. 7. If this be the Case, then *Noah's* Blessing is like unto *Lamech's* Prophecy; for as *Lamech* foresaw that *Noah* should receive from God the Covenant of the Earth's Restoration; so *Noah* foresaw, that the greater Blessing still behind, even the Covenant that should restore Man to himself and to his Maker, should be convey'd through the Posterity of *Shem*. This accounts for the Preference given to *Shem*; for *Noah* spoke not his own Choice, but declared the Counsel of God, who had now, as he frequently did afterwards, chosen the Younger before the Elder.





DISCOURSE V.



O what Purposes the antient Prophecies were given, and upon what Foot Religion stood from the Beginning to the Restoration, or new Establishment of the World, in *Noah* and his Posterity, has been already considered. We are now advancing to Times of greater Light, to clearer and more distinct Prophecies, and more nearly relating to God's great Dispensation of Mercy and Goodness towards Mankind, manifested by the Revelation of his Son. This Period begins at the Call of *Abraham*, and runs thro'

the Law and the Prophets, ending where the Gospel of *Christ Jesus* commences. It contains such a Variety and Number of Prophecies, that I cannot propose to myself so large and extensive a Subject to be the Matter of short Discourses from this Place. But it may perhaps be of some Use, to inquisitive Minds, to suggest to them the great and general Design of Providence in the Prophecies of this Period; to shew them the State of Religion during this Season; and how well the Light of Prophecy afforded to this Generation corresponded to the State and Necessity of the Times. If in this Method of enquiring we can arrive at the Knowledge of God's Design, in giving the Word of Prophecy to the old World, we shall the more easily discern of what Use these antient Oracles are to the present World; and how far the Truth of the Gospel, which we believe and profess, depends upon the Authority and Evidence of antient Prophecy. In order to this Enquiry it is necessary first to consider the State of true Religion, and the Supports it had during this Period; for

Prophecy being relative to the State of Religion in the World, we must know the one, to understand the other.

How soon the World after the Deluge corrupted their Ways, and lost the Knowledge of the one true God, *and changed the Glory of the Incorruptible — into an Image made like to corruptible Man*, we cannot certainly know ; but this we certainly know, that in *Abraham's* Time Idolatry had spread far and wide; and taken deep Root even in the Family of *Shem*, and in that Branch of it particularly from which *Abraham* descended. This being the Case, 'tis highly probable that true Religion had entirely failed in the World, had not God visibly interposed to preserve such a Sense of it, as was necessary for the Accomplishment of his great Design to restore Mankind.

Necessary I say to this End; for most evident it is, That it was not the Intention of Providence in the Call of *Abraham*, or in giving the Law of *Moses*, to propagate or restore true Religion among all Nations of the old World; so far from it, that the Covenant with *Abraham* is
founded

founded upon the Condition, not of reforming, but of destroying the idolatrous Nations in the Land of *Canaan*; and the Sign of Circumcision was given to separate *Abraham* and his Posterity from the rest of Mankind; which shews that the rest of Mankind were not called to that Covenant, of which Circumcision was the Sign or Sacrament. Moreover, the Law of *Moses* was established in such Rites and Ceremonies, and many of them to be performed only in the Land of *Canaan*, that there is no room to suppose that it was ever intended to be a general Law for Mankind. Add to this what *Paul* and *Barnabas* tell the People at *Lystra*, That *God in Times past suffered all Nations to walk in their own Ways*. Acts xiv. 16. And what St. *Paul* says to the People of *Athens*, *God winked at the Times of Ignorance; but now commandeth all Men everywhere to repent*, Acts xvi. 30. And it will be most evident, that the Call of *Abraham*, and the Law of *Moses*, consequent to it, were not intended as general Calls to Mankind, but were subservient to
some

some other View and Design of Providence.

If we consider now the whole World lost to all Sense of Religion, estranged from God, and void of all Hope towards him; and suppose *one* Family chosen out merely for their *own sakes* to be delivered from the general Corruption and Misery, without any View or Design towards the general Good of Mankind, it gives so mean, so partial a View of God, that I think no Religion can consist with such a Notion.

But if the Law of *Moses* was neither intended to be a general Law for Mankind, nor yet intended as a partial Favour and Benefit to the *Jews* only, exclusive of all Mankind, what remains, but that we must consider it, as a Method of Providence working towards the great End always in View, the general Restoration of Mankind from the Curse of the Fall? As the Opening of that Scene which was to bring a Blessing *upon all Nations* of the Earth? Accordingly we find this to be the Case; when *Abraham* was called and received the Promises, he had Assurance

rance given him not only of peculiar Blessings to himself and Posterity, but likewise of a general Blessing to be conveyed thro' him to all Mankind: "*I will make of thee*, says God, *a great Nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy Name great, and thou shalt be a Blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee:*" Immediately it follows, "*And in thee shall all Families of the Earth be blessed.*" Gen. xii. 2, 3. 'Tis of great Importance in the present Question to distinguish rightly these Promises.

The Promise of temporal Prosperity to *Abraham* and his Posterity is sufficiently explained in the Course of his Story; at the seventh Verse of this Chapter God tells him he would *give to his Seed the Land of Canaan*: And in Chap. xv. 18. that he would give the *Land unto his Seed*, "*from the River of Egypt unto the great River, the River Euphrates.*" In the xvii. Chapter, that "*he would multiply him exceedingly, that he should be a Father of many Nations, and Kings should come out of him.*"

These

These were great Promises, and great Inducements to Obedience; but, except the particular Gift of the Land of *Canaan*, (and there were probably other Parts of the World as good as that) there was nothing in them peculiar to *Abraham* and his Posterity only. There were before *Abraham's* Time, and have been since, many great and powerful Nations of another Kindred; the Sons of *Ham* and *Japhet*, and those descended by other Branches from *Shem*, have arrived to great Prosperity, and left a numerous Issue behind them, in virtue of the common Blessing bestowed on their Ancestors after the Flood, to whom God said, “ *Be ye fruitful and multiply and bring forth abundantly in the Earth, and multiply therein*; to them likewise he gave the Promise of fruitful Seasons; and sustained them with Corn and with Wine.” Thus far then the Promise to *Abraham* was derived from the temporal Covenant establish’d with *Noah*, and his Sons, after the Flood, in which other Nations and People had a Share as well as himself; and some of them in
some

some Respects, a much greater; as he must needs judge, who knows any thing of the ancient or present Empires of the *East* and *West*. But if we look forward, we shall see the Distinction between the several Promises grow plain, when God renews the Covenant, and limits the *peculiar Blessing* of *Abraham* to the Son, which should be born of *Sarah* his Wife. In the xviith of *Genesis* the Lord appears to *Abraham* and says, “ *I am the*
“ *Almighty God, walk before me, and be*
“ *thou perfect*; then follows, *I will make*
“ *my Covenant between me and thee, and*
“ *will multiply thee exceedingly, — and*
“ *thou shalt be a Father of many Nati-*
“ *ons.*” At the 7th and 8th verses God promises to establish an *everlasting* Covenant with him and his Seed *after him*, to give him and them all the *Land of Canaan* for an *everlasting Possession*, and *to be their God*. Here are either two Covenants, mentioned together in the Compass of a few Lines, or else the same Covenant repeated with this Difference, that in the last Place it is styled an *everlasting* Covenant, and the *Land of Canaan*

is assign'd for an *everlasting Possession*; with this remarkable Addition, that God promises to be the *God of Abraham*, and of his Seed after him. And this is the first time that this peculiar Character assumed by God, of being the God of *Abraham*, and of his Seed, occurs in Scripture, and 'tis evidently connected to the Promise of the *everlasting Covenant*. Which Connexion seems to be the true Foundation of our Saviour's Argument, from this Expression, to prove the Resurrection of the Dead; as the Connexion of the Promise of the Land of *Canaan* to the everlasting Covenant seems to be the Reason of treating the Land of *Canaan* as a Type or Sign of Heaven. This Character of God, thus connected to the everlasting Covenant, is likewise a plain Intimation, that two distinct Covenants are mentioned in this Place, and not the same repeated again. Towards the close of this Chapter *Abraham* receives an express Promise that he should have a Son by *Sarah* his Wife, within the Compass of a Year, and that the *everlasting Covenant* should be established

blished with *this Son*, and his Seed after him. — *Abraham* had at this Time a Son of thirteen Years old, born of *Hagar* the *Egyptian*; to whom the Angel of the Lord had appeared when she was with Child of this Son, and promised to *multiply her Seed exceedingly, that it should not be numbered for multitude*. Gen. xvi. 10. This Promise therefore of a numerous Posterity flourishing in the Earth, though Part of the Promise given to *Abraham*, as we have seen before, is no Part of the everlasting Covenant, confirmed to *Isaac*, exclusively to all the natural Sons of *Abraham*. This appears likewise from the very Passage where this Promise is limited to *Isaac*: *Abraham*, when he received the Promise of a Son by his Wife, puts up a Petition, whatever the Occasion of it was, for his Son *Ishmael*; “*O that Ishmael might live before thee.*” To which he receives this Answer; “*As for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: Twelve Princes shall he beget, and I will*
make

“ *make him a great Nation:* ” Immediately it follows, “ *But My Covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee:* ” Can any thing be plainer to shew that the *everlasting Covenant*, to be establish’d with *Isaac* and his Seed, was of a very different kind, from the Covenant given to *Ishmael*, of multiplying his Seed, of making him Father of Kings and Princes, and of raising him into a great Nation? And yet this very Covenant was given originally to *Abraham*; he was to have a numerous Posterity, to be Father of Kings, and of a great Nation. *Ishmael* was admitted to the Benefit of this Covenant, as well as *Isaac*, and yet expressly excluded from that which God emphatically styles MY Covenant, and the *everlasting Covenant*; an undeniable Evidence that God’s Covenant with *Abraham* was founded on better Hopes than those of mere temporal Prosperity. This Distinction, of two Covenants in the Case of *Ishmael* and *Isaac*, made by God himself, is the Foundation of St. *Paul*’s Argument to the *Galatians*: “ *It is*

“ written, says he, *that Abraham had*
 “ *two Sons; the one by a bond Maid, the*
 “ *other by a free Woman: But he who*
 “ *was of the bond Woman was born af-*
 “ *ter the Flesh; but he of the free Wo-*
 “ *man was by Promise: Which things*
 “ *are an Allegory; for these are the two*
 “ *Covenants:*” And whoever is capa-
 ble of considering what is related con-
 cerning this Matter in the Book of *Gene-*
sis, will evidently see that these are in-
 deed two Covenants; and two such Co-
 venants as fully justify the Apostle’s Rea-
 soning upon this Point.

Since then the Promises of temporal
 Prosperity, made to *Abraham* and his
 Seed after him, are evidently distinct
 from the Subject matter of the *everlast-*
ing Covenant, made with him, and li-
 mited to *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and afterwards
 to the Tribe of *Judah*, and lastly to
 the Family of *David*; it remains to
 be considered, what the Subject of the
 Covenant so limited is. If we look
 back to the Call of *Abraham*, and the
 Promises which attended it, there we
 shall find, that after enumerating the
 temporal

temporal Blessings, which were to descend from *Abraham* to his Posterity, one Blessing is added, in which all the World has an Interest, and which was to be conveyed to them through *Abraham* and his Seed; “*In thee*, says God, “*shall all the Families of the Earth be blessed.*” Whatever *Abraham* understood by this, I think verily he could not understand it as his Children at this Day understand it, who expect, in virtue of the Promises made to the Fathers, to be Lords of the World, and to have Dominion over all People: A strange *Blessing* this *to all Nations*, that they should fall from their natural Liberty, and become subject to the Dominion of one People! None but a *Jew* can see the Happiness of such a State; the Nations of the Earth, if left to their Choice, would all refuse this great Blessing for themselves. But before we enquire into the special Meaning of this Blessing upon all Nations, we must see whether **this universal** Blessing to be revealed in due time, were truly the Matter of God’s *special*, his *everlasting* Covenant with

Abraham. We have seen already that *Ishmael* was excluded from this special Covenant, and *Isaac* admitted to it; we have the Covenant of God with *Ishmael*, and the Covenant of God as renewed with *Isaac*, both preserved in the Book of *Genesis*; and 'tis observable that the two Covenants, as to worldly Prosperity, are nearly the same; but they differ in this, the Covenant with *Ishmael* says nothing of the *Blessing to all Nations*, the Covenant with *Isaac* expressly renews this very Promise: *In thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed*: Gen. xxvi. 4. A plain Proof surely, that the special Matter of God's Covenant, limited from *Abraham* to *Isaac* exclusive of *Ishmael*, consisted in the Promise of this *universal* Blessing, to be conveyed through *Abraham* and *Isaac* and their Posterity to all Mankind.

We have the like Evidence from a like Case, which happened between the Children of *Isaac*; with this only difference, that *Ishmael* and *Isaac* were born one of a bond Woman, the other of a Free, but *Esau* and *Jacob* were Twins of one Birth,
both

both born of a free Woman: The Blessing of *Abraham* was limited to *Jacob*, and deny'd to *Esau*. Yet *Esau* received a temporal Blessing from his Father, as well as *Jacob*. The Apostle to the *Hebrews* accounts it *Profaneness* in *Esau* that he sold his Birth-right; it must be because he sold the *Blessing of Abraham*, and the Promises of God; upon any other Account there is no room for this Charge, for it was never reckoned *Prophaneness* to sell mere temporal Rights; nor was *Esau* excluded from the Benefit of the temporal Promises by this scandalous Bargain. If *Jacob* was blessed with the *Dew of Heaven, and the Fatness of the Earth, and Plenty of Corn and Wine*, Gen. xxvii. 28. *Esau's* Blessing in this respect was not inferiour; *Thy Dwelling*, says his Father, *shall be the Fatness of the Earth, and of the Dew of Heaven from above: &c.* 39. If *Nations* were to bow down to *Jacob*; &c. 29. *Esau* likewise was to live and prevail by his *Sword*: &c. 40. If *Jacob's Brethren* were to bow down to him, &c. 29. yet the Time would come when *Esau* should have Dominion,

and break even this Yoke from off his Neck, *ŷ. 40.* Thus the Case stands between them, if we interpret the whole Blessing given to *Jacob*, of temporal Prosperity and Dominion; but there is great Reason to limit Part of it to the peculiar Blessing of *Abraham* and *Isaac*; which was undoubtedly conveyed at this Time to *Jacob*. The conveying the Birth-right in the Family of *Abraham* was conveying the special Blessing of *Abraham*, which always attended upon the Birth-right. This Birth-right was evidently made over to *Jacob*, when it was said, *Be Lord over thy Brethren.* The special Blessing was in time to be extended to *all Nations*, as well as to the House of *Abraham*, for *in his Seed all the Families of the Earth were to be blessed*; and therefore in Consequence of the Birth-right it is said to *Jacob*, — *Let People serve thee, and Nations bow down to thee,* *ŷ. 29.* It is very evident from the whole Story of *Isaac's* Blessing his two Sons, that the *chief Blessing*, he had to bestow, fell upon *Jacob*; and 'tis as plain that there are no Words to limit this particular

ticular Blessing to *Jacob*, but these now under Consideration; and *Isaac* himself understood that he had pass'd away the Blessing of *Abraham* to *Jacob* in these Words, and therefore he tells *Esau* that the Blessing was gone beyond Recovery, *I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed*, &c. 33. But *Esau* pressed his Father for a Blessing on himself: *Isaac answered and said — Behold I have made him thy Lord, and all his Brethren have I given to him for Servants; and with Corn and Wine have I sustained him: And what shall I do now unto thee, my Son?* &c. 37. *Esau* still urges his Father; *bless me, even me also, O my Father*. Upon this *Isaac* blesses him; and pray observe; of Corn and Wine and temporal Power he gives him a full and an equal Share: — *Thy Dwelling shall be the Fatness of the Earth, and of the Dew of Heaven from above*: The only Limitation on the Blessing is, *Thou shalt serve thy Brother*. Whatever then was peculiarly given to *Jacob* was contained in the Grant, *of being Lord over his Brethren*; and what this peculiar Gift was,

we may learn from *Isaac* himself, who in the next Chapter renews the Blessing on *Jacob*, and gives expressly to him and his Seed *The Blessing of Abraham*, v. 4. In the same Chapter the Blessing is renewed and confirmed by God himself; *In thee and in thy Seed shall all the Families of the Earth be blessed*, v. 14.

That the Regard of *all Nations*, to the Seed in which they were *all to be blessed*, shou'd be expressed by *their bowing down to him*, is no hard Figure of Speech; that even this Yoke, this Superiority of *Abraham's* Family, shou'd one Day be broken, as the Promise to *Esau* sets forth, when *Jews* and *Gentiles* shou'd be on an equal Foot, and equally the People of God, is no more than the original Covenant contains; for the Day was to come, when *all Nations* should be equally *blessed*.

If you expound this Blessing of temporal Dominion, see how the Case will stand: *Jacob is to rule over Esau*; yet no sooner is the Blessing given, but he flies his Country for fear of *Esau*; Gen. xxvii. 43, &c. He lives abroad for many
Years,

Years; and when he returns, the Fear and Dread of his Brother returns with him: He *was greatly afraid and distressed*. Gen. xxxii. 7. His only refuge in this Distress was to God; *Deliver me, I pray thee, from the Hand of my Brother, from the Hand of Esau*: Y. 11. When he sends a Message to him he styles himself, *Thy Servant Jacob*; Y. 20. When he meets him, *he bowed himself to the Ground seven times, until he came near to Esau*; xxxiii. 3. When he speaks to him, he calls him *Lord*; when he was kindly receiv'd by *Esau*, he says, *I have seen thy Face, as though I had seen the Face of God, and thou wert pleased with me*: Y. 10. What is there in all this to shew the Rule and Dominion that was given to *Jacob* over his Mother's Sons?

If you suppose the Prophecy, understood of temporal Dominion, to be fulfilled in the Posterity of these two Brothers, let us see how the Case stands upon this supposition: The Family of *Esau* was settled in Power and Dominion many Years, before *Jacob's* Family had any certain Dwelling-place; the Dukes
and

and Kings of *Eſau's* Houſe are reckon'd up, *Gen.* xxxvi. and the Hiſtorian tells us, *Theſe are the Kings that reigned in the Land of Edom, before there reigned any King over the Children of Iſrael, &c.* 31. When the appointed Time was come for eſtabliſhing the Houſe of *Iſrael*, and giving them the Land and Poſſeſſions of their Enemies, the Family of *Eſau* were, by a particular Decree, exempted from the Dominion of *Iſrael*. *The Lord ſpoke unto Moſes, — Command thou the People, ſaying, Ye are to paſs thro' the Coaſt of your Brethren the Children of Eſau, which dwell in Seir, and they ſhall be afraid of you: Take ye good heed unto your ſelves therefore, meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their Land, no not ſo much as a Foot-breadth, becauſe I have given Mount Seir unto Eſau for a Poſſeſſion,* Deut. ii. 4, 5. If in the Time of *David* they of Edom became his Servants; 2 Sam. viii. 14. yet in the Days of *Jehoram* did they recover again, and made a King over themſelves. 2 Kings viii. 20. And, in the Time of *Abaz* they revenged the Affront, by ſmiting

ting Judah, and leading away Captives.
2 Chron. xxviii. 17. Can you now suppose that this Variety of Fortune between the Children of *Jacob* and *Esau* was the Thing intended, or meant to be described, when the Promise was given to *Jacob*, that *his Mother's children should bow down to him*? If this were the Case, *Isaac* needed not to be so scrupulous in preserving the peculiar Blessing to *Jacob*; he might have given *Esau* a Share of it; and the Event wou'd have answered.

It appears, I think, from hence, that the Blessing given to *Jacob*, and expressed in Words implying a *Rule over his Brethren*, was truly a Conveyance of the Birth-right to him in the Family of *Abraham*; that the Birth-right in *Abraham's* Family respected the special Blessing and Covenant given to *Abraham* by God; That *Isaac* himself calls this Right of Primogeniture in his House, *the Blessing of Abraham*; that God himself, in Confirmation of *Jacob's* Right of Primogeniture, assures him, that *in his Seed all the Families of the Earth shall be blessed*.

Now

Now this Promise being the only special Promise made to *Isaac* and *Jacob* in Preference to their Brethren, and in Consequence of God's everlasting Covenant limited to them, this Promise must necessarily be understood to be the subject Matter of the everlasting Covenant: And 'tis very observable that this Blessing so peculiarly belongs to this Covenant, that it is never mentioned with respect to *any other Person whatever*, than such only, to whom the Right of this Covenant, and the Promise of the Land of *Canaan* descended. Some interpreters have imagined that these Words require no higher a Sense than this, that all Nations shou'd see the Prosperity of *Abraham* and his Seed so evidently, that they shou'd bless themselves and others in some such Form as this; *God make thee as great as Abraham, and his Seed*. But can we imagine that God's *everlasting Covenant*, as he himself calls it, was given only to produce a proverbial Form of Speech in the World? That the Prerogative of *Isaac* above *Ishmael*, of *Jacob* above *Esau*, lay in this only, that the Nations shou'd use
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the Name of one in their mutual good Wishes, and not of the other? Besides, when was this ever the Case, when did all Nations thus bless themselves, or when was there Occasion for it? The Posterity of *Ishmael* was established in Power much sooner, and were as great and successful for many Ages, as the *Jews*, and much larger Empires have sprung from them: So that there was hardly ever any ground to take up this proverbial Speech, which some make to be the Whole of this special Covenant limited from *Abraham*, to *Isaac* and *Jacob*.

What distinct Notion *Abraham* had of the Blessing promised to all Nations thro' him and his Seed, what he thought of the Manner and Method by which it shou'd be effected, we cannot pretend to say. But that he understood it to be a Promise of restoring Mankind, and delivering them from the remaining Curse of the Fall, there can be little doubt. He knew that Death had entred by Sin; he knew that God had promised Victory and Redemption to the Seed of the Woman: Upon the Hopes of this Restoration the
Reli-

Religion of his Ancestors was founded; and when God, from whom this Blessing on *all Men* was *expected*, did *expressly promise* a Blessing on *all Men*, and in this Promise founded his *everlasting Covenant*, what cou'd *Abraham* else expect but the Completion in his Seed of that antient Promise and Prophecy, concerning the Victory to be obtained by the Woman's Seed? The Curse of the Ground was expiated by the Flood, and the Earth restored with a Blessing, which was the Foundation of the temporal Covenant with *Noah*; a large Share of which God expressly grants to *Abraham*, and his Posterity particularly, together with a Promise, by their Means, to bring a new and further Blessing upon the whole Race of Men. Lay these Things together, and say what less cou'd be expected from the new Promise or Prophecy given to *Abraham*, than a Deliverance from that Part of the Curse still remaining on Man, *Dust thou art, and to Dust thou shalt return*? In virtue of this Covenant *Abraham* and his Posterity had reason to expect, that the Time wou'd come when
Man

Man shou'd *be called from his Dust again*; for this Expectation they had his Assurance who gave the Covenant, That *he would be their God* for ever. Well might our Saviour then tell the Sons of *Abraham*, that *even Moses at the Bush* shew'd the Resurrection of the Dead, *when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*

To preserve these Hopes in the World, upon which the Restoration of the World to Life and Immortality depended, was *Abraham* called from his own Country and Kindred, then tainted with Idolatry, to be a Witness to God and his Truth. Had he, with all the rest of Mankind, been suffered to continue in Idolatry, the Knowledge of God had been lost, and the Remembrance of his Providence in creating Man at first, of the Hopes given of a second and better Creation after the Fall, had utterly perished. *Abraham* was not called merely for his own Sake, much less were his Posterity, a stubborn and stiffnecked People, preserved for their own Sakes; but he was called, and they pre-

preserved, to be Instruments in the Hands of God, for fulfilling the Purposes of his Mercy, in the Restoration and Redemption of the World. The great Article of the Covenant, limited to *Abraham* and his chosen Seed, most evidently regarded the whole Race of Man, and was to grow, in the Fullness of Time, into a Blessing upon all the Nations of the Earth: He and his Posterity were Depositories of these Hopes, or to use the Words of *St. Paul*, this was the *Jews* chief Advantage above others, “*That unto them*
“*was committed the Oracles of God*”

This Account will help us to a distinct View of the Prophecies, relating to this Period of Time of which we are speaking. As two Covenants were given to *Abraham* and his Seed, one a temporal Covenant, to take place, and to be performed in the Land of *Canaan*; the other a Covenant of better Hopes, and to be performed in a *better Country*; so are the Prophecies, given to *Abraham* and to his Children after him, of two kinds; one relative to the temporal Covenant, and given in Discharge and Execution of
2 God's

God's temporal Promises; the other relative to the spiritual Covenant, given to confirm and establish the Hopes of Futurity, and to prepare and make ready the People for the Reception of the Kingdom of God.

Many of the antient Prophecies relate to both Covenants; and hence it comes to pass, that at the first Appearance many of the antient Predictions seem to be hardly consistent with themselves, but to be made up of Ideas, which can never unite in one Person, or in one Event. Thus the Promises to *David* of a Son, to succeed in his Throne, have some Circumstances, which are applicable only to *Solomon*, and the temporal Dominion over the House of *Israel*; some, which are peculiar to that Son of *David*, who was Heir of an *everlasting* Kingdom, which was to be establish'd in Truth and Righteousness. Hence it is, that we often find the Promises of temporal Felicity, and temporal Deliverances, raised so high, that no temporal Felicity or temporal Deliverance can answer the Description; the Thoughts and Expressions of the Prophet naturally

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moving from the Blessings of *one* Covenant, to the Blessings of the *other*, and sometimes describing the inconceivable Glories of one Covenant, by Expressions and Similitudes borrowed from the more sensible Glories and Blessings of the other. The Prophet *Isaiah*, being sent to raise the drooping Spirits of *Abaz* and the House of *David*, threatned at that Time with immediate Ruine by two potent Enemies; could not but remember the double Promise of a Kingdom, given to *David*, which was a double Security for the Establishment of his House; together therefore with the Assurances and the Signs given of temporal Deliverance, he intermixes the Assurance and the Sign of the greater Deliverance, before the Completion of which the House of *David* could not fail; for that House should continue, till *the Virgin conceived and brought forth Immanuel*, that Son of *David*, to whom the *everlasting Kingdom* was promised. Ought it to be matter of Wonder, that the Prophets, who were Ministers of both Covenants; entrusted with the Counsels of God for the Direction

tion of the temporal Affairs of the People of *Israel*, and commissioned to cherish the Hopes and Expectations of a better Kingdom, to be given in virtue of God's everlasting Covenant; ought it to be wondered at, I say, that they often speak of both Kingdoms together, that they make Use of the temporal Deliverances as an Argument to encourage the Hopes of the spiritual? When in truth the temporal Deliverances, being the actual Performance of one Covenant, were a great Security for the Performance of the other; and it was unnatural to see the Hand of God performing one Promise, and not to reflect upon the Certainty of his performing the other.

The Blessings belonging to the special Covenant, given to *Abraham* and his Seed, were reserved to be revealed in God's appointed Time. The Prophets under the Law cou'd not be commissioned to declare these Blessings openly and nakedly, without anticipating the Time of their Revelation. Hence it is that the Predictions, concerning *Christ* and his Kingdom, are clothed in such Figures, as were

proper to raise the Hope and Attention of the People, without carrying them beyond the Bounds of Knowledge, prescribed by God to the Age of the *Jewish* Covenant.

If we consider each kind of Prophecy distinctly by itself, we shall the better discern how this Case stands. To begin then with those relating to the temporal Covenant: *Abraham* was called from his Father's House, upon a Promise, that he shou'd become a *great Nation*, and that his *Seed shou'd possess the Land of Canaan*. This Promise cou'd not be fulfilled in all its parts, till *Abraham's* Family was multiplied into a Nation. This required many Years; and what must become of these Children of Promise in the mean time? They had no Country of their own; where then shou'd they settle and multiply? I will not launch out into Speculation upon the Methods of Providence, by which the People of *Israel* were raised and preserved; but let any one read the Prophecies from the Call of *Abraham* to *Moses*, he will evidently see that they refer to this State of Things: To

arm the Faith of *Abraham* and his Posterity, against the Fears of Disappointments, under the necessary Delays, and some evil Treatments they were to undergo; God acquaints *Abraham* with his Purpose, and tells him, his Seed shou'd be *four hundred Years in a strange Land*. This Circumstance, had it not been foretold, wou'd, in all Probability, have blotted out the Memory of the Promise; four hundred Years of Distress are sufficient to cure any People of their great Expectations. But this Prophecy was a Warning and a Security in this Respect. When the Time of Servitude drew near, and the People wanted more than ordinary Help to preserve their Trust in the Promise of God, *Jacob*, before his End, was enlightned, by the Spirit of Prophecy, to set before the twelve Tribes the Glory, and Honours, and Possessions, that shou'd accrue to each in the happy Day of their Triumph: By the same Spirit, *Joseph*, on his Death-bed, assures them, That *God would surely visit them, and bring them into the Land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob*. These were Cordials

prepared against the Day of Distress, then near at hand.

The Times of *Moses* and of *Joshua*, those Days of Miracles as well as Prophecies, want no Explication: The Intention of Providence appears plain in every Step, and may be discerned by every Eye.

The Commonwealth of *Israel* was raised, and flourished under the temporal Covenant, given at first to *Noah*; and, in a particular Manner, with additional Promises, confirm'd to *Abraham* and his Seed: For this reason all the Promises and Threatnings of the Law are temporal, suitable to the Age and Season of the World. But these temporal Blessings and Punishments were so visibly administered by the Hand of God, that every Instance, of the Execution of the Threats and Promises of the Law, became a new Proof of its divine Authority. If you enquire why God did so visibly interpose in the Government of this People, always guiding and directing them in the Conduct of temporal Affairs, and Matters of State, by the Voice of his Prophets, when

when all other Nations, before and since, have been left under the general Rules of Providence to their own Conduct and Discretion; the Answer, I think, is this: No other Nation ever had a divine Law, given upon the Establishment of temporal Blessings and Punishments; and therefore God had not so bound himself to any other Nation, to account to them for their temporal Prosperity and Adversity: But to the *Jews*, with whom he had established a Law and a Covenant upon *temporal Promises*, he stood obliged to make good his Word, and to justify himself to them in the Administration of *temporal Affairs*. For this reason a Succession of Prophets was raised up among them, at whose Mouths they might receive the Direction of God: And this is what *Moses* means when he says, “ *What Nation*
“ *is there so great? Who hath God so*
“ *nigh unto them, as the Lord our God*
“ *is in all things that we call upon him*
“ *for?* ” Deut. iv. 7.

When ever it was necessary to punish the People for their Disobedience; that they might not be tempted by the Pro-

prosperity of other Nations, and their own Adversity, to fall away to other Gods; they were forewarned of the Things that were to befall them, their Calamities were prophetically described to them, that they might know whenever they suffered, that it was the very Hand of God, of *their own God*, that was upon them: And this is the Reason of our finding so many Prophecies, under the Law, relating to the civil State and Condition of the *Jews*; for this Cause the great Captivity of *Babylon* is so largely and fully foretold by the Prophets, that the People might not be tempted to think that the Gods of the Nations had prevailed against them, and thereby be seduced, as often times they were seduced by this very Imagination, to forsake God in their Distress; but that they might know that the Almighty Hand of the Lord was in all their sufferings, and might thereby become humble and obedient. And further, that they might know that all their Adversity and Prosperity came on them, according to the express Terms of their Covenant with God, who blessed them when obedient,

dient, humbled them when obstinate. All Nations have had, and still have their Turns of Prosperity and Adversity, and God thinks not himself obliged to account to them for the Measures of his Providence towards them: But the Case was otherwise with the *Jewish* Nation, for God having established a Covenant with them, upon temporal Promises and temporal Curses; the very Execution of the Covenant, on God's Part, required him to appear and openly administer the Penalties and Promises of his Law; to procure the Happiness of the People when obedient, and to inflict the Punishment due to their Iniquity: Hence it is that he directs them in the Way of temporal Happiness by the Voice of his Prophets; and gives them open Warning of all Evils which he brings on them: That they might see him in every Instance performing the Word of his Covenant. Every Prophecy from God spoke in the Language of *Moses's* Song, *See now, that I, even I am he, and there is no God with me: I kill, and make alive; I wound and I heal;*

I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my Hand.

This accounts for all the Prophecies of the old Testament relating to the temporal State of the *Jewish* Nation; with which we have no further Concern, than only to give a reasonable Account of them; that the ancient Prophets of God may not pass for mere *Fortune-tellers*, as they have been represented to the World of late.

The People of the *Jews* were so prone to follow the Customs of the Nations around them, and to fall away to Idolatry, that from their coming into *Canaan*, till the Times of the *Babylonish* Captivity, there was a perpetual Struggle between the Prophets of God, and the false Prophets of the Nations, which should prevail; with this View are many ancient Prophecies given, to preserve the People from being seduced by the Nations round them. We may learn this from the Reproof given to the Messengers of *Ahabaziah*, who had sent to enquire of *Baalzebub*, the God of *Ekron*, whether he should recover of his Disease: “Go, says
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“ the Angel of the Lord to *Elijah*, Go
“ *meet the Messengers of the King of*
“ *Samaria, and say unto them; Is it not*
“ *because there is not a God in Israel,*
“ *that ye go to enquire of Baal-zebub*
“ *the God of Ekron? Now therefore*
“ *thus saith the Lord, thou shalt not*
“ *come down from that Bed on which*
“ *thou art gone up, but shalt surely die:”*

2 Kings i. 3, 4. To the very same Purpose God speaks in the Prophet *Isaiah*, rendering an Account of his ancient Prophecies — “ *I have declared the former*
“ *things from the Beginning, and they*
“ *went forth out of my Mouth, and I*
“ *shewed them, I did them suddenly, and*
“ *they came to pass. Because I knew that*
“ *thou art obstinate, and thy Neck is an*
“ *Iron Sinew, and thy Brow Brass. I*
“ *have even from the Beginning declared*
“ *it to thee; before it came to pass I shew-*
“ *ed it thee; lest thou shouldst say, Mine*
“ *Idol hath done them, and my graven*
“ *Image, and my molten Image hath com-*
“ *manded them.”* *Isaiah* xlviii. 3, 4, 5.

You see now upon what Foot all the Prophecies in the old Testament stand,
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which relate to the temporal Concerns of the *Jewish* Nation; you see likewise the Reason why this kind of Prophecy has ceased in the *Christian* Church. The Gospel is not founded in temporal Promises; so far from it, that we are called upon to take up our Cross, and follow *Christ*. The bringing in of better Hopes has vacated the Promises of the *Mosaick* Covenant; and 'tis expected of us, after so much Light given, that our Faith should be Proof against the Adversities of the World, without the Help of a Prophet to foretell, or to reveal to us, in every Instance, the Counsel of God.

These Prophecies relating to the Things of this Life, concern us but little; they have had their Completion, long since, in Events which affect not us: But others there are; relating to the great *Depositum*, entrusted with the *Jews*, even the Hopes of Redemption; which were to be a Blessing to all the Nations of the Earth, in which we are highly concerned, and which will deserve our particular Consideration.



DISCOURSE VI.



THE Prophecies of the old Testament, generally considered, relate either to the temporal State and Condition of the *Jews*, and were, in order to the Administration and Execution, on God's Part, of the temporal Covenant, given to *Abraham* and his natural Descendents; or they relate to that great and universal Blessing, promised to *Abraham* and to his Seed, tho' not limited to them, but expressly designed and extended, in the Words of the original Covenant, *to all the Nations of the World*. Of these, we have already considered the first

first Kind, and endeavoured to shew the Purport and Design of Providence, in the many Oracles reducible to this Head. It remains now, that we consider the Prophecies of the second Kind in the same Method, not enquiring into the express Meaning and Accomplishment of every single Prophecy, applicable to this Subject; but into the general Use and Design of these Prophecies, which being discovered we shall be able, with better Success, to apply ourselves to the Examination of each divine Oracle. The Prophecies of the several Periods, already considered, have been found to correspond to the State of Religion in the World, at the Time of giving the Prophecy: A great Presumption that the Case is the same under the *Jewish* Dispensation. We must therefore in order to our present Enquiry, consider the State of Religion under the *Mosaick* Dispensation, and examine how far, and to what Purposes Prophecy was requisite, and whether in fact these Purposes were served by the Prophecies under the Law.

As to the State of Religion under the Law of *Moses*, to save your Time and my own, I shall refer my self to the Books of the Law, in every Man's Hand. But two Questions there are, necessary to be considered at present; and first, The Promise to *Abraham* consisting of two distinct Parts, or including two distinct Covenants; the one, relating to the temporal State and Prosperity of his Seed in the Land of *Canaan*; the other, to the Blessing, which thro' him and his Seed, was to be conveyed to *all Nations* of the Earth; the Question is, to which of these two Covenants the Law of *Moses* is annexed. If the Law was given in Execution of the *Promise*, made to *all Nations*, then have the Nations nothing further to expect; God has fulfilled his Word: The *Jews* are right in adhering to their Law; and we in the wrong in rejecting it: But if the Law of *Moses* is built upon the temporal Covenant only, and given properly to the *Jews* only; then both *Jews* and *Gentiles* have further Hopes, and a just Expectation remaining, to see God's Promise to *all Nations* accomplish'd;

plish'd; which was not accomplished by the giving of the Law.

I have already, in the Course of this Argument, observed to you, that the Law of *Moses* was given to the *Jews* only, and not to all Nations: For which these Reasons, among others, may be assigned:

First, The Obligation of no Law extends beyond the Terms of its Promulgation; now the Law of *Moses* was promulgated to the *Jews* only; the Words are, *Hear O Israel*; whereas, had the Law been intended for all Nations, it ought to have been promulgated to all, and the Words should have been, *Hear all Nations of the Earth*: And thus the *Christian* Law is promulged; the Apostles had it expressly in Commission from *Christ* “*To*
“ *teach ALL NATIONS; baptizing*
“ *them in the Name of the Father, and*
“ *of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;*
“ *teaching them to observe all things*
“ *whatsoever I have commanded you:*
“ *and lo, I am with you ALWAYS,*
“ *even unto the END OF THE*
“ *WORLD:*” A Commission, which plainly shews that the Gospel Dispensa-
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tion extends to all Places, and all Times, even to the End of the World; and that no other new Law is to be expected.

Secondly, The Law of *Moses* relates to the temporal Covenant only, as being establish'd expressly upon the Terms and Conditions of it. The ten Commandments are founded upon this, that God brought them, the *Jews*, *out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage*: A Reason which extended to the People of the *Jews* only; for all other Nations were not brought out of the Land of *Egypt*, and the House of Bondage. The first Threatning is temporal, of visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation; the Promise is of the same kind; both relative to the temporal Covenant: as is likewise the Promise of the fifth Commandment, *That thy Days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*.

Thirdly, Many Rites and Performances of the Law were confined to the Land of *Canaan*, and the Temple of *Jerusalem*: for which Reason even the *Jews*, in their

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Dispersion, pretend not to observe the Law in these Points, and they wou'd be Transgressors of the Law, if they did. Now 'tis absurd, if the Law was intended for all People, that the main Performances of it should be confined within the Territories of one particular People only: And therefore, when the *Christian* Law was to take place, every Country was to be a proper Place of divine Worship: Which is the true Meaning of our Saviour's Words to the Woman of *Samarita*; *Woman believeme, the Hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father,* John iv. 21.

Now this being the Case, 'tis evident that the Promise of a Blessing to all Nations subsisted in its full Force and Vigour, during the Continuance of the Law of *Moses*; for as that Promise was not completed by the giving of the Law, in which all Nations were not concern'd; so neither could so general a Promise be annull'd, or set aside, by a private Law, given to one People only. And this is the true Sense and Meaning of *St. Paul's* Argument

Argument *Gal. iii.* “*This I say, that the*
“*Covenant that was confirmed before*
“*of God in Christ, the Law which was*
“*four hundred and thirty Years after*
“*cannot disannul, that it should make*
“*the Promise of none Effect.*”

Secondly, Another Question proper to be consider'd with respect to the State of Religion under the *Jewish* Dispensation, is this: How far the Religion of the *Jews* was preparatory to that new Dispensation, which was in due Time to be revealed, in Accomplishment of the Promise, made to all Nations. Now if *Abraham* and his Posterity were chosen, not merely for their own sakes, or out of any partial Views and Regards towards them, but, to be Instruments in the Hand of God for bringing about his great Designs in the World; if the temporal Covenant was given for the sake of the everlasting Covenant, and to be subservient to the Introduction of it; 'tis highly probable that all Parts of the *Jewish* Dispensation were adapted to serve the same End, and that the Law founded on the temporal Covenant was intended, as the temporal

Covenant it self was, to prepare the Way to better Promises. If this, upon the whole, appears to be a reasonable Supposition, then have we a Foundation to enquire into the Meaning of the Law, not merely as it is a literal Command to the *Jews*, but as containing the Figure and Image of good Things to come. It can hardly be supposed, that God intending finally to save the World by *Christ* and the Preaching of the Gospel, should give an intermediate Law, which had no respect nor Relation to the Covenant, which he intended to establish for ever. And whoever will be at the Pains to consider seriously the whole Administration of Providence together, from the Beginning to the End, may see perhaps more Reason than he imagines, to allow of Types and Figures in the *Jewish* Law.

To proceed then: The *Jewish* Dispensation not conveying to *all Nations* the Blessing promised through *Abraham's* Seed, but being only the Administration of the Hopes and Expectations, created by the Promise of God; in this respect it stood entirely upon the Word of Prophecy;

phesy; for future Hopes and Expectations from God can have no other real Foundation. In as much then as the *Jewish* Religion did virtually contain the Hopes of the Gospel, the Religion it self was a Prophecy; and as the *Jewish* Church was founded to preserve, and to administer these Hopes, the prophetical Office was in some Measure necessary and essential to this Church, to nourish and support their Hopes and Expectations from God.

In what manner the *Blessing of all Men* was established with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, we have already seen. The next Limitation of it is to the Tribe of *Judah*, in that famous Prophecy delivered by *Jacob*, just before his Death, *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the People be*, Gen. xlix. 10. There are so many Interpretations of this Prophecy, some peculiar to the *Jews*, and some to Christians; and so many Difficulties to be accounted for, whatever Way we take, that I shall not pretend to en-

ter into the Decision of them at present. But take the whole Prophecy, relating to the Tribe of *Judah*, together, and there will be enough to answer our immediate Purpose, without entring into these Obscurities. *Judah*, says *Jacob*, *Thou art he whom thy Brethren shall praise; thy Hand shall be in the Neck of thine Enemies: Thy Fathers Children shall bow down before thee.* In a Form of Words, not unlike this, the peculiar Blessing was appropriated to *Shem*; *Japhet shall dwell in the Tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his Servant*, Gen. ix. 26. And when *Jacob* himself had the Blessing of *Abraham* settled on him, by his Father *Isaac*, in preference to his Brother *Esau*, the very Words in which the Grant was made to him, are these: *Let People serve thee, and Nations bow down to thee; be thou Lord over thy Brethren, and let thy Mothers Sons bow down to thee*, Gen. xxvii. 29. Now when *Jacob* uses partly these very Words, partly others of like Import, can he be understood to bestow any other Blessing on his Son *Judah*, than that very Blessing, which he, in this same Form of

Words, received from his Father? Cou'd he forget the Import of his own Blessing when he was preferred to *Eſau*? Or cou'd he use this solemn Form of Words, and mean something quite different from the Sense they carried, when his antient Father pronounced them over him? The other Parts of this Prophecy relate, I think, to the temporal Prosperity of *Ju-dah*, and promise a Continuance of that Tribe till the *Blessing of Abraham* shou'd come, and be extended to *all Nations*: but I will not enter into this large Field of Controversy.

The next and the last Limitation of this special Promise is to the Family of *Da-vid*; a Point so uncontested, that there is no room to call it in question, without rejecting the Authority of all the Prophets; and to plain withal, that it needs no proving. Here the Promise rested until it fell upon *him*, for whom it was reserved, and to whom it was ever due; upon him, to whom the *Birthright* appertained, who was the *Firstborn* of every Creature; and concerning whom the Almighty had declared long before, *I will*

make him my Firſtborn, higher than the Kings of the Earth. Here it is fixed, and here it muſt reſt, till *all Things are accompliſhed; for he muſt reign till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet; till Death itſelf is ſwallowed up in Victory.*

It is much to be obſerved, that the Prophecies relating to the Covenant of better Hopes, were given to the People of God, when Religion itſelf ſeem'd to be in Diſtreſs, and to want all Helps to ſupport it in the World. When *Abraham* was called to forſake the Country and the Religion of his Fathers, then had he the Promise of the bleſſed Seed. *Iſaac* and *Jacob* being ſurrounded on all ſides with Idolatry, in the miſt of a very corrupt and degenerate World, were ſuſtained by the ſame Hopes: When the People of *Iſrael* were in *Egypt*, and under many Temptations of following the Gods of the Country, then was the Promise ſettled on *Judah*, and the remarkable Prophecy given of *Shiloh's* coming. As ſoon as God appeared manifeſtly, and oftentimes miraculoſly, making good the Promiſes of the temporal Covenant to the Children of *Abraham,*

Abraham, and the People wanted no other Evidence to keep them stedfast in their Obedience, or to secure them from falling away to the Gods of the Nations round them, we meet with few Instances of this sort of Prophecy. Whilst God himself was Governour and King of the People, and directed all their Affairs by the Voice of his Prophets, their Adversity and their Prosperity, which were always in proportion to their Obedience and Disobedience, were a sufficient Instruction to them to cleave to God stedfastly. This was the Case from *Moses* to *David*, who had the Promise of the everlasting Covenant established with him and with his Seed, in Reward of his Constancy and Faith towards God under all the Difficulties, thro' which he made his way to the Crown, appointed to him by God. But when the succeeding Kings fell into Idolatry, and the People, prone to Evil, followed their Example, so that God determin'd to remove them out of his Sight, and scatter them among the idolatrous Nations, whose Gods they had chosen before the Lord their Saviour: then, for
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the Sake of the few Righteous, were the better Hopes revived, that *the Just might live by Faith*, and that a *Remnant might be saved*. The Prophet *Isaiab*, who speaks so plainly of the Kingdom of *Christ*, entered upon his Office not long before the ten Tribes were carried into Captivity, as a Punishment for their Idolatry: The Prophet *Jeremy* saw the other Tribes carried away to *Babylon*: And *Daniel* was himself one of the Children of the Captivity. This was a Time in which true Faith wanted the Comfort of future Hopes; the present Scene was dark and gloomy, the loving Kindness of the Lord was hid from his People, and they saw nothing but Tokens of Anger and Displeasure on every side: In this Time therefore God thought fit to give more and plainer Intimations of his Purpose, to establish the Kingdom of Righteousness, than ever had been given before, from the Days of *Adam*: Now was it that the *Seed in whom all Nations were to be blessed* was manifestly described; that the Time and Place of his Birth were appointed; his great Works, his Glories, and

and his Sufferings, were foretold. Now was it, that God taught his People plainly to expect a new Covenant, a better than that made with their Fathers: In a Word, now was it that all Eyes were opened to look for his coming, who was to be the *Glory of Israel*; the *Desire of all Nations*; a *Light to lighten the Gentiles*. This great Scene being opened, and placed in so clear a View, the Work of Prophecy was finished, and in a few Years, the Gift itself ceased: A plain Evidence that the *Spirit of Prophecy* is the *Testimony of Jesus*; and that all the Blessings and Promises, given to God's antient People, were to have their final Accomplishment in the Manifestation of the *blessed Seed*.

The ten Tribes, which were carried away by the King of *Assyria*, never more returned to their own Country; the Tribe of *Judah*, after seventy Years Captivity, came back to the Land of *Canaan*, erected a new Temple, and continued to be a Tribe and a People till the last Destruction of *Jerusalem* by the *Romans*. If you think all this happened by Chance, there is no room to ask you any Questions
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about it: But if you allow the Hand of God to be in these Events, tell me from whence this Distinction, this partial Regard to the Tribe of *Judah*? Read their own Prophets, and learn from thence the Character of their Tribe, you'll find no Merit in them to justify this Regard of God towards them: They were as bad as their Neighbours; but they had one Advantage, they had a Promise which none of the ten Tribes had, *That the Sceptre should not depart from Judah — till Shiloh came*: for the fulfilling of this Promise, and all the Promises relating to the *blessed Seed*, was *this Tribe* preserved some hundreds of Years, after the others had ceased to be a People.

That this Tribe was resettled purely for the Accomplishment of God's Promises of a better Covenant, appears from all the Circumstances of their Condition after their Return: They were not restored to enjoy the antient Privileges of the People of God in the Land of *Canaan*: Those Privileges were forfeited by their Iniquity; Their *Urim* and their *Thummim* were no more heard of; and after

after they were once established in the Land (a Point in which Providence was nearly concerned) the Gift of Prophecy ceased, and God appeared not in the Management of their temporal Affairs, as formerly he had done: They were often distressed, and often brought near Ruine; they suffered in all the Changes of the Empire of the East, and were, as they express themselves, *Servants in the Land which God gave to their Fathers*, Neh. ix. 36. I mention this particular, to account to you the more clearly for the ceasing of Prophecy some Ages before the coming of *Christ*. Prophecy among the *Jews* was relative to the two Covenants given to *Abraham*; when the *Jews* had forfeited the Blessings of the temporal Covenant, and God had fully opened and prepared the Way for the Coming in of the Second, he recalled his Ministers and Ambassadors, for whose Service he had no longer any Occasion.

That the Prophecies, relating to the second and better Covenant, produced a suitable Effect, and were matter of Comfort and Consolation to the Righteous among

mong the *Israelites*, may be collected from some few Allusions to the Opinions of their own Times, to be found in the Books of the Prophets. That the People of *Israel* had, in the Days of the Prophet *Amos*, a Notion of some great Deliverance, or Blessing, still to come, may be gathered from the Reproof given to those, who, though void of the Fear of God, yet expected a Share in his Blessing. *Wo unto you that desire the Day of the Lord: To what End is it for you? the Day of the Lord is Darkness and not Light.* Amos v. 18. As some waited in Faith for the Consolation of *Israel*, so others there were who mocked at all such Hopes and Expectations; to these the Prophet *Isaiah* speaks; *Wo unto them, that draw Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and Sin as it were with a Cart-rope: That say, Let him make Speed and hasten his Work, that we may see it: And let the Counsel of the holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it,* v. 18, 19. Under the Power of these irreligious Mockers the Righteous (and such has ever been their Lot) were wearied
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and oppressed, but the Prophet speaks comfort to them; *Hear the Words of the Lord, ye that tremble at his Word; your Brethren that hated you, and cast you out for my Name sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: But he shall appear to your Joy, and they shall be ashamed.*

lxvi. 5. As wicked as the People of *Israel* were, yet in all Times were there some who waited for the Salvation of God; whose Faith and Hope are well expressed by the Son of *Sirach*; *The Power of the Earth is in the Hand of the Lord, and in due Time he will set over it one that is profitable*, Ecclus. x. 4.

That the Prophecy, given at the Time of the Fall, was understood, in the antient *Jewish Church*, to relate to the Times of the *Messias*, may with great Probability be inferred from many Passages, but especially from one in *Isaiah*, where after a full Description of the Kingdom of *Christ*, and the Happiness of those who were the *Seed of the Blessed of the Lord*, the State and Condition of the Wicked, in the time of that Kingdom, is thus described in few Words; *And Dust shall*
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be the Serpent's Meat, Isa. lxxv. 25. By what Figure of Speech, or for what Reason is the Serpent here made to signify those, who are distinguished from the *Seed of the Blessed*? And how comes the Punishment of these Reprobates to be set forth by the *Serpent's eating Dust*? Here is nothing in the Prophet to explain this Figure; but he seems to use it as a Saying well known, and perfectly understood by his Countrymen; and from whence could they borrow it, but from the History of Man's Fall? There you may find the *Seed of the Blessed*, to whom Victory over the Serpent is promised; and there may you see the *Serpent* doomed to eat *Dust*; and the Allusion to this antient Prophecy, in *Isaiah's* Description of the Kingdom of the *Messias*, shews in what Sense it was understood of old, and for many Ages before the Birth of *Christ*.

These Prophecies, relating to the Kingdom of the *Messias*, have still a larger and more extensive Use, not confined to any particular Age, but reaching to every Age of the *Christian Church*: They were given to the *Jews of old* for the Support

of their Faith, and are a standing Reproof to their Children *of this Age* for their Unbelief: They taught those of *old Time* to expect the Kingdom of *Christ*, and are a Condemnation to those of *this Time* for rejecting it: They are a Support and an Evidence to the Gospel, and furnish every true Believer with an Answer to *give to him, who asketh the Reason of the Hope that is in him.*

They who are educated in the Belief of *Christianity*, and taught to receive the Books of both Testaments with equal Reverence, are not apt to distinguish between the Evidence for their Faith, arising from the one, and the other. But if we look back to the earliest Times of Preaching the Gospel, and consider how the Case stood as to the *Jewish* Converts on one Side, who were convinced of the divine Authority of the old Testament; and as to the *Gentile* Converts on the other, who had no such Persuasion; the Distinction will appear very manifestly. The antient Prophecies, though they are Evidence both to the *Jew* and to the *Gentile*, yet are they not so to

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both in the same Way of Reasoning and Deduction, nor to the same End and Purpose. For consider; the *Jew* was possessed of the Oracles of God, and firmly persuaded of the Truth of them; the very first thing therefore which he had to do upon the Appearance of the *Messiah*, was to examine his Title, by the Characters given of him in the Prophets; he could not, consistently with his Belief in God, and Faith in the antient Prophecies, attend to other Arguments, 'till fully satisfied and convinced in this: All the Prophecies of the old Testament, relating to the Office and Character of the *Messiah*, were immoveable Bars to all Pretensions, 'till fulfilled and accomplished in the Person pretending to be the promised, and long expected Redeemer. For this Reason the Preachers of the Gospel, in applying to the *Jews*, begin with the Argument from Prophecy. Thus St. *Paul*, in his Discourse with the *Jews* at *Antioch* in *Pisidia*, begins with the Call of *Abraham*, and after a short historical Deduction of Matters from thence to the Times of *David*, he adds, *Of this Man's Seed*
bath

hath God according to his Promise raised unto Israel a Saviour Jesus, Acts xiii. 23.

Where you see plainly that the whole Argument rests upon the Authority of Prophecy; and all the Parts of this Apostolical Sermon are answerable to this Beginning, proceeding from one End to the other upon the Authority of the old Prophets: But the very same Apostle *St. Paul*, preaching to the People of *Athens* *Acts xvii.* argues from other Topicks; he says nothing of the Prophets, to whose Mission and Authority the *Athenians* were perfect Strangers, but begins with declaring to them, *God that made the World and all Things therein*; He goes on condemning all idolatrous Practices, and assuring them that “*God is not worshipped with Men’s Hands, as though he needed any thing.*” He accounts to them for the past Times of Ignorance at which God winked, and tells them, that *now* he calls all Men to Repentance, having appointed *Christ Jesus to be the Judge of all Men*; for the Truth of which he appeals to the Evidence of *Christ’s Resurrection*, — “*Whereof*

“ says the Apostle, *he hath given Assurance unto all Men, in that he hath raised him from the Dead,* ” *ſ. 31.*

Whence comes this Difference? How comes *St. Paul's* Argument, upon one and the ſame Subject, in *Acts* xiii. and xvii. to be ſo unlike to each other? Can this be accounted for any other Way, than by conſidering the different Circumſtances of the Perſons to whom he delivered himſelf. In *Acts* xiii. he argues profeſſedly with *Jews*, to whom were committed the Oracles of God, and who, from theſe Oracles, were well inſtructed in the great Marks and Characters of the expected *Meffiah*. It had been highly abſurd therefore to reaſon with them upon other Arguments, 'till he had firſt convinced them by their Prophets; — and having ſo convinced them, it would have been impertinent. To them therefore he urges and applies the Authority of Prophecy only: But to the *Athenians*; who knew not the Prophets, or if they knew them, yet had no Reverence or Eſteem for them; it had been quite ridiculous to offer Proofs from Prophecies:

cies: The Appeal therefore, before them, is made to the found and clear Principles of natural Religion; and to the Miracles of the Gospel, the Fame of which probably had, long before, reached to *Athens*; and the Truth of which, they being mere Matters of Fact, was capable of undeniable Evidence and Demonstration.

'Tis very observable that St. *Paul*, in his Sermon at *Athens*, goes no further, than calling them to Repentance, and to Faith in *Christ*, as the Person appointed by God to judge the World: In which Doctrine he had natural Religion with him in every Point, excepting the Appointment of *Christ* to be Judge, for which he appeals to the Evidence, given by God in raising *Jesus* from the Dead. But to the *Jews* he speaks of a Saviour, of Remission of Sins, of Justification of all Believers from all Things, from which the Law of *Moses* could not justify. Whence comes this Difference, unless from hence, That the *Jews* were from their Scriptures well acquainted with the lost Condition of Man, and knew that a Redemption

from Sin, and the Powers of it, was to be expected? But the *Gentiles* had lost this Knowledge; and were first to be taught the Condition of the World, and the various Administrations of Providence with Regard to Mankind, before they could have any just Notion of the Redemption of the World.

With respect to the *Gentiles* then, the Case stood thus: They were called from Idols to the Acknowledgment of the true God; from Iniquity to the Practice of Virtue; by setting before them *Christ Jesus*, the Preacher of Righteousness, and the appointed Judge of the World, under the Confirmation of many Signs and Wonders, wrought by God for this Purpose. Being so far established, they were led back to view this wonderful Scene of Providence, as it stood in the antient Prophecies; and with them the Authority of the Prophecies stood mainly upon the exact Completion, which was before their Eyes; From the Authority of Prophecy so established, they understood the past Workings of Providence, and the State of the World; and
came

came to see that *Christ* was not only the Judge, but the Redeemer of Mankind: To the *Jew* Prophecy was the first Proof, to the *Gentile* it was the last: The *Jew* believed in *Christ*, because foretold by the Prophets; the *Gentiles* believed the Prophets, because they had so exactly foretold *Christ Jesus*. Both became firm Believers; having, each in his Way, a full View of all the Dispensations of Providence towards Mankind.

If this Account be true, as it appears to me to be, it will enable us to clear this Argument from Prophecy of the many Misrepresentations, under which it has been industriously clouded: It will shew us, that there is no Occasion for a *Gentile* to become a *Jew*, in order to his becoming a *Christian*, upon the Authority of the antient Prophets: It will shew us, that the Proof from Prophecy is not *argumentum ad hominem*, in the *Jews* Case, nor in the *Gentiles*; nor yet an Argument of the same kind in both Cases, though, in both Cases proceeding upon real and solid Principles of Reason. But I must leave these Applications to you, and

proceed to observe another Use of Prophecy, with regard to the *Jews*, and for which the *Gentile* World seems not to have had the same Occasion.

The *Jews* lived under a divine Law, established in Signs and Wonders, and mighty Works, founded in very great Promises on one side, in Threatnings of mighty Terror on the other; as far as the Blessings and Terrors of this World can extend: They are warned over and over not to forsake their Law, or to suffer any strange Customs and Ceremonies to grow up among them. These Cautions, intended to preserve them from the Corruptions of the Heathen Nations around them, might easily, as in the Event they have done, grow into Prejudices, against any future Revelation, tho' made upon the Authority of God himself. To guard against such Prejudices, and to render them without Excuse, it was but reasonable to give them early and frequent Notice of the Change intended, that they might not, under the Colour of adhering steadfastly and faithfully to God's first Covenant, reject his Second, when the
Time

Time of Publication came. There are of this sort many Prophecies in the old Testament; of this kind are the many Declarations on God's Part, that he had no Pleasure in Sacrifices and Oblations, in new Moons and in Sabbaths; strang Declarations, considering that all these were his own Appointments! But not strange, considering the many and frequent Prophecies of a new and a better Covenant, to be established with his People. The Prophet *Isaiah* is frequently styled the Evangelical Prophet, because of the many and express Prophecies, to be found in him, relating to *Christ* and his Church: Now this Prophet, in the very Entrance upon his Work, shews the little Value of mere legal Institutions: *To what Purpose*, says he, speaking in God's Name, *is the Multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? — I am full of the burnt Offerings of Rams, and the Fat of fed Beasts, and I delight not in the Blood of Bullocks, or of Lambs, or of He-Goats — Your new Moons, and your appointed Feasts, my Soul hateth: They are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them*, *Isaiah* i. 11, 14.

But the most remarkable Passage of this kind, and which deserves our particular Attention, is the Prophecy of *Moses* himself, recorded in the xviith of *Deuteronomy*. *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy Brethren like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken, &c. 15.* The same is repeated again, &c. 18. with this Addition; *And it shall come to pass, (they are the Words of God) that whosoever will not hearken unto my Words, which he (that Prophet) shall speak in my Name, I will require it of him, &c. 19.* Here now is a plain Declaration on God's Part, at the very Time the Law was established, of another Prophet, like unto *Moses*, to be raised in time, as a new Lawgiver, to whom all were to yield Obedience. I know full well, that great Authorities are produced for interpreting these Words of a Succession of Prophets, in the *Jewish Church*: But be the Authorities never so great, the Appeal lies to the Law and to the Testimony, and thither we must go.

In the first Place, then, the Text speaks of one Prophet only in the singular Number,

ber,

ber, and not of many. In this Case therefore the *Letter* of the *Text* is with us; an Argument which ought to be of great Weight with those, who make such heavy Complaints, whenever we pretend to go beyond the *literal Sense* of the old Testament. But,

Secondly, To expound this Passage, of a *Succession* of Prophets, and to say that *they all* were to be like *Moses*, contradicts God's own Declaration concerning the Manner, in which he intended to deal with *other* Prophets.

In the Twelfth of *Numbers* we read, that *Miriam* and *Aaron* began to mutiny against the Influence and Authority of *Moses*. *Hath the Lord spoken only to Moses*, say they, *bath he not spoken also by us?* This Controversy was like to be attended with such ill Consequences, that God thought proper to interpose himself. Hear then his Determination; *If there be a Prophet among you, I, the Lord, Will make my self known unto him in a Vision, and will speak unto him in a Dream. My Servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine House, with him*
will

will I speak Mouth to Mouth, even apparently, and not in dark Speeches; and the Similitude of the Lord shall be behold: Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my Servant Moses?

Here now is a plain Declaration of the great Difference between *Moses* and all other Prophets, and as plain an Account wherein that Difference did lie: As to all other Prophets, God declares he would speak to them in *Visions* and in *Dreams*, but with *Moses* he would converse *Mouth to Mouth*, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, *Face to Face*. Herein then consisted one chief Dignity and Eminence of *Moses*; and in this Respect the Prophets of *Israel* were not to be like him.

Thirdly, That the likeness to *Moses* spoken of in the Passage under Consideration, had a special Regard to this singular *Privilege* of seeing God *Face to Face*, is evident, partly from the Text it self, and partly from the Close of the Book of *Deuteronomy*, compared with the Text: In the Text it self, a Promise is given of a Prophet like *Moses*, which Likeness in the 18th Verse is expounded by God's saying,

ing, *I will put my Words in his Mouth*: Which imports something more than speaking to him in *Visions* and in *Dreams*: And that the Likeness to *Moses* was understood to consist in this immediate Communication with God, is most evident from the last Verses of the Book; where it is said: *And there arose not a Prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew Face to Face*. Who added these Words to the Book of *Deuteronomy*, it matters not at present to enquire; for, they having been receiv'd in the *Jewish Church*, are an authentick Testimony, first, how the antient *Jews* understood these Words, *like unto Moses*; and *Secondly*, That the antient Church had seen no Prophet like unto *Moses*: And yet they had a Succession of Prophets immediately from the Death of *Moses*, of whom *Joshua* was the first *; and these last Verses of *Deuteronomy*, added after, at least in the Time of *Joshua*, exclude him from all Pretensions of being *the Prophet*, or *one* of the Prophets like unto *Moses*: And if this Character will

* *Hof. xii. 13. Eccles. xlv. 1.*

not fit *Joshua*, much less will it fit those who succeeded him, who were not greater, nor had greater Employment under God, than he: An evident Proof, that the Promise of a Prophet *like unto Moses*, was not understood by the antient *Jewish* Church, to relate to a Succession of Prophets among them; since they declare to us, that in the Succession of Prophets, there had not been one *like unto Moses*.

The later *Jews* have not departed from the Opinion of their Ancestors in this respect. They distinguish *Moses* from all other Prophets, and the highest Degree of Inspiration is styled by them *Gradus Mosæicus*. The Difference between this Degree and all others, they make to consist in four Particulars. 1. *Moses* had no Dreams nor Visions. 2. He had Light from God immediately, without the Ministry or Interposition of Angels. 3. His Mind was never disturbed or dismayed by the prophetick Influence, *For God spake to him as a Man speaks to his Friend*, 4. He cou'd prophesy at all Times when he wou'd; whereas others prophesy'd

prophecy'd only at particular Times, when the Word of God came to them †.

Another chief Dignity belonging to *Moses*, and in which the Prophets under the Law were not like unto him, is, that he was a *Law-giver*. No Prophet after *Moses* was sent with such a Commission, during the Time of the Law; and yet the Prophet here foretold was evidently to resemble *Moses* in this particular. “*He was to speak all that God commanded him, and whoever hearkened not to him was to be destroyed.*” *Moses* had no greater Authority than this, nor can any Words describe a greater. Besides, there is a Circumstance belonging to this Prophecy, which ties it down, I think, to this Sense. *Moses* says, *God will raise up unto thee a Prophet like unto me, according to all that thou desiredst of him in Horeb, in the Day of the Assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the Voice of the Lord my God; neither let me see this great Fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken — I*

(†) See Smith's *Select Discourses*, Page 261.

will raise them up a Prophet from among their Brethren like unto thee, and will put my Words in his Mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him, &c.

It is to be observed, that this Request of the People was made at the giving of the Law in Horeb: Moses had often prophesied to them before, and they were not put under any Terror by it; but when the Law was delivered, and God descended in Fire, and the whole Mount quaked greatly, they desired, that Moses might speak to them, and not God, lest they should die: Upon this the Promise is given, *I will raise them a Prophet like unto thee, and put my Words in his Mouth.* Is it not evident, that this new Prophet was to do that, in a familiar gentle Way, which God himself did in the Mount, surrounded with Majesty and Terror? And was not that, the giving of the Law? To apply this Promise to any thing else, is making it to have no relation to the Request upon which it was granted. The People liked Moses his ordinary Way of *propheying* to them so well

well, that they desired he might be employed to deliver God's Laws to them in the same Manner that he delivered God's other Comands: The Request related therefore merely to the Manner of God's giving his Law; they were under no Uneasiness at his Method in conveying Prophecies to them: And consequently the Promise of God must relate to the *giving of a Law* to his People, by one to be raised up among themselves, and not merely to a *Succession of Prophets*, about which the People were in no distress.

Lastly, If we enquire, from historical Evidence, after the Completion of this Prophecy, we shall find, that it did most punctually agree to the Character of our Blessed Saviour, and not to any other Prophet, either before or after him; all the Prophets of the Old Testament *saw Visions*, and dreamed *Dreams*; all the Prophets of the New were in the same State. *St. Peter* had a Vision, *St. John* saw Visions, *St. Paul* had Visions and Dreams: But *Christ* himself neither saw Vision, nor dream'd a Dream, but had intimate and immediate Communication

with the Father; he was in *the Father's Bosom*, he and no Man else had *seen the Father*, was *one with the Father*, and had the *Fullness of the Godhead* in him. Let any Man now seriously consider this; *Moses* and *Christ* are the *only Two*, in all the sacred History, who had this Communication with God: The Likeness to *Moses* is said directly to lie in this, of seeing *God face to face*. Can the Promise, then of raising a Prophet like unto *Moses* be possibly applied to any other Person than *Christ Jesus*? The other Part of the Parallel needs not to be insisted on; that *Christ* was a Lawgiver, will be easily admitted on all Hands. But the Execution of the Threat, annexed to this Prophecy, is too remarkable to be passed over in silence; it has been literally fulfilled upon the whole Nation; every Man who considers the State of the *Jews*, from the Rejection of *Christ* to this Day, must own, that this Part of the Prophecy, at least, has been punctually verified.

This Prophecy, and many others, seem, as I observ'd, intended for the *Jews* principally, to prepare them betimes for the

Reception of a new Lawgiver, and to intimate to them, that the *Mosaic* Covenant was not to be perpetual.

Thus have I gone thro' the several Periods of Prophecy under the old Testament, and endeavoured to shew the main Design and Use of it, opening a way to a fair and impartial Consideration of the particular Prophecies relating to each Period. I conceiv'd it seasonable, at a Time when the Argument from Prophecy was expos'd to open ridicule, to suggest some proper Observations on the Subject, for the Assistance of serious Minds dispos'd to consider; to throw in one Mite, as an Offering to the Love of *Christ*, and his Gospel, in which I hope to live and to die.





T H R E E
DISSERTATIONS.

I. The Authority of the Second
Epistle of St. PETER.

II. The Sense of the Antients be-
fore *Christ*, upon the Circum-
stances and Consequences of the
FALL.

III. The Blessing of JUDAH,
Gen. xlix.







DISSERTATION I.

The Authority of the second Epistle of St. PETER.



THE Occasion I had in the First of the foregoing Discourses, to consider and compare together the two Epistles of St *Peter*, led me to enquire into the Grounds and Reasons of the antient Doubt, concerning the Authority and Genuineness of the second Epistle. It will be worth while to examine the Fact, and state it fairly; which will enable us to

judge whether this Doubt is well founded or no.

The learned *Grotius*, in his Annotations on this Epistle, observes; “ That
 “ many of the Antients were of Opinion
 “ that this was not an Epistle of St. *Peter*
 “ the Apostle, induced thereunto by the
 “ difference of Style between this and
 “ the first Epistle, (acknowledged by
 “ *Eusebius* and *Jerom*) and by this E-
 “ pistle’s having been rejected by many
 “ Churches.” *Huetius* * reports the Case
 more accurately, and tells us, that this
 second Epistle was “ *inter dubias collo-*
 “ *cata ab aliquibus — propter styli cum*
 “ *priore discrepantiam;*” reckoned doubt-
 ful by some because the Style of it was dif-
 ferent from that of the first Epistle. This
 is the Truth of the Case, and this the
 only Reason, to be found in Antiquity,
 of the Doubt concerning this Epistle.
Grotius’s second Reason, that this Epistle
 was not received in many Churches, is
 too strongly expressed, and not sufficient-
 ly warranted. *Origen* is the first, as far as
 appears, who mentions the Doubt about

* Demonstratio Evan. p. 21.

this Epistle: St. Peter, he tells us, *left one Epistle confessedly his; perhaps too a Second; for of this there is Doubt**. Eusebius informs us, *That there never was any Doubt of St. Peter's first Epistle: But as to the Second, the Tradition was, that it was not Canonical: Nevertheless appearing to many, (or to the generality) to be a useful Piece, it was used jointly with the other Scriptures*†. That this second Epistle was received and used by the Church in Eusebius's Time, appears I think from this very Passage: He says it was *used with the other Scriptures*, and that all the Ground there was to doubt of its Authority, was an antient Tradition, which probably was no other than the Authority and Report of Origen before cited. That this Doubt ever affected *whole Churches*, or that there were *Churches* which rejected this Epistle, does not appear: If this had been the Case, it

* Περίς — μίαν ἐπιστολὴν ὁμολογῶν μὲν καὶ ἀλλοίαν, ἔσω δὲ καὶ δευτέραν ἀμφισβῆσαι γάρ. Origen. apud Euseb. Lib. 6. cap. 25.

† Τίς δὲ φερεμένη ἀπὸ τῶν δευτέραν, ὅτι ἐνδιάθετον μὲν εἶναι παρελήφαμεν· ὅμως δὲ πολλοῖς χρησίμους φαίνεται, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστολῶν γινώσκων. Lib. 3. cap. 3. vide cap. 25.

would have been a stronger Objection against the Authority of the Epistle, than the antient Suspicion, and more worthy of the Historian's Notice.

What Submission is due to the Doubts of Antiquity, when we have only the Doubt transmitted to us, without the Reasons upon which it was grounded, I need not enquire; but surely when we have the Reasons of the Doubt preserved, we have a very good Right to judge and enquire for ourselves: And this happens to be the Case here: *St. Jerom* takes notice of this Doubt, and tells us the Reason of it: *The second Epistle*, says he, *is rejected by many, (or by most, a plerisque) because it differs in Style from the First* *.

The whole Doubt, you see, is founded upon a Piece of Criticism, started at first probably by some Man of Learning and Figure, and followed implicitly by others. The Usage and Authority of the Church, for ought that appears to the contrary, were on the side of the Epistle, and pre-

* Quarum secunda à plerisque rejicitur, propter styli cum priore dissonantiam. *Catal, Script, Eccles.*

yailed at last against the learned Observation: Which was the very Case of St. *Jude's* Epistle, which, for a like Reason, was rejected by many, but the general Authority of the Church prevailed to establish it; *autoritatem vetustate & usu meruit, & inter sanctas Scripturas computatur**.

That there is a Difference in the Style of the first and second Epistles of St. *Peter*, is allowed; but it is not such a Difference as ought to create any Doubt of the Genuineness of the Epistle. One Reason is, because this difference of Style does not run through the whole Epistle, but affects only one Part of it; another Reason is, that this Difference may be more probably accounted for, than by supposing the second Epistle to come from another Hand than the first.

The second Epistle is divided into three Chapters; the first and the third stand clear of this Difficulty, agreeing very well with the Style of the first Epistle. The second Chapter is full of bold Figures, and abounds in pompous Words and Ex-

* Hieron. Catal. Script. Eccl.

pressions: It is a Description of the false Prophets and Teachers, who infested the Church, and perverted the Doctrines of the Gospel; and it seems to be an Extract from some antient *Jewish* Writer, who had left behind him a Description of the false Prophets of his own, or perhaps earlier Times; which description is applied both by St. *Peter* and St. *Jude* to the false Teachers of their own Times. If this be the Case, where is the Wonder that a Passage transcribed from another Author, and inserted into this second Epistle, should differ in Style from St. *Peter*'s first Epistle? especially, considering that the Style of this Passage differs as much from all the rest of this second Epistle, as it does from the first. St. *Jerom* * supposed, and others † have followed his Opinion, that St. *Peter* made use of different Interpreters to express his Sense in his two Epistles; but had this been the Case, the Difference of Style would have appeared in the *whole* Epistle, and not in *one* Part of it only, which is

* Epist. ad Hedibiam quæst. 2.

† Estius, Calmet, &c.

the present State: And I see no Reason to think that St. *Peter* did not write both his Epistles himself.

Were this nothing but a Conjecture, yet so reasonable an one it is, that the Doubt raised against this second Epistle, merely from this Difference of Style, could hardly stand before it. But we can go further, and shew upon very probable Grounds that this was indeed the Case.

The very Beginning of the second Chapter, of this second Epistle, shews that St. *Peter* had the Image of some antient false Prophets before him, in describing the false Teachers of his own Time: *There were false Prophets also among the People, even as there shall be false Teachers among you, &c. 1.* If you consider the Character he gives of these false Teachers, it will appear to be drawn from the Description of the old false Prophets; *such they are*, he tells us, *as have forsaken the right Way, and are gone astray, following the Way of Balaam the Son of Bosor, who loved the Wages of Unrighteousness, &c. 15.* A very natural Thought this, and to be expected, in a Description of false Prophets

Prophets made by an antient *Jewish* Writer; but such an one as hardly wou'd have occurred in an original Description of the false Teachers under the Gospel; St. *Jude* has this Comparison, and others of the same kind joined with it: *They have gone in the Way of Cain, and ran greedily after the Error of Balaam, and perished in the Gain-saying of Core.* *Ÿ. III.* These are antique Figures and discover the Age to which they belong: And St. *Jude* tells us plainly that these false Teachers were *παλαι προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τὸ τὸ κέρμα*, *described or set forth of old for this Condemnation*; and 'tis very likely that both St. *Peter* and he had the old Description before them, when they gave the Character of the false Teachers of their own Times. St. *Jude's* Epistle is so like the second Chapter of St. *Peter's* second Epistle, the Figures and Images in both are so much the same, as likewise the antient Examples and Instances made use of, that it has been commonly thought that St. *Jude* copied after St. *Peter's* Epistle: And yet the Turn of Words and Expressions are so different; the Choice of
 Matter

Matter likewise is in Part so different, some things being mentioned in one, and omitted in the other; that'tis much more probable that both copied from the same Original, and drew from it according to their own Judgments. I will give some Instances of this, and leave the rest to the Reader's own Examination:

St. Peter, *ŷ*. 4.

Εἰ γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς ἀγγέλων ἀμαρτησάντων ὅσα ἐφείσατο, ἀλλὰ ζυγαῖς ζύφου ταρταρώσας, παρέδωκεν εἰς κρίσιν τέλει ῥηιδύας·

ŷ. 6. Πόλεις Σοδόμων καὶ Γομόρρας τε φράσας καλαιοφῆ κατέκρινεν, ὑπόδειγμα μελλόντων ἀπεθεῖν τεθεικώς.

St. Jude, *ŷ*. 6.

Ἀγγέλους τε τὰς μὴ τηρήσαντας τῷ ἐαυτῶν ὄρχῳ, ἀλλὰ ὑποληπίαν τὸ ἴδιον οἰκηλήριον, εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας, δεσμοῖς αἰδίοις ὑπὸ ζύφον τετήρηκεν.

ŷ. 7. Ὡς Σόδομα καὶ Γόμορρα, καὶ αἱ πρὸς αὐτὰς πόλεις τῷ ὅμοιον τέτοις τρόπον ἐκπορεύσασαι, καὶ ἀπελθεῖν ἐπίσω ζυγὸς ἐτέρας.

ŷ. II.

ἤ. 11. Ἄγγελοι ἰσχυροὶ
 ἢ διωάμεν μείζονες ὄντες,
 ὃ φέρουσι κατ' αὐτῶν
 ὡς αὖ Κυρίῳ βλάβος φη-
 μιν κρῖναι.

ἤ. 9. Ὁ δὲ Μιχαήλ
 ὁ ἀρχάγγελος, ὅτε τῷ
 Διαβόλῳ Διακρινόμενος
 διελέγετο πρὸς τὸν Μω-
 σέως ὤματι· κ.τ.λ.

St. *Peter* speaks of the *Angels* that *sinned*, St. *Jude* gives an account of their Sin, that they *kept not their first Estate, but left their own Habitation*: This Account of the Angels Sin is no where else to be found in Scripture, but was, if I may guess, in the old Book from which St. *Jude* transcribed; for 'tis very unlikely that he should add these Circumstances, if he had only St. *Peter's* αἰγέλων ἀμαρτησάντων, before him. The very same Difference may be observed in setting forth the Example of *Sodom* and *Gomorra*, which is common to both Epistles; St. *Peter* speaks only of their Judgment, and of their being made an Example to Sinners: St. *Jude* adds an Account of their Crime: And though, as far as the two Epistles agree in respect to this Instance, the Images and Ideas are the same, yet the Turn of Expression is very different.

Again:

Again, *St. Peter* *ſ. 11.* in reproof of the Presumptuous and Self-willed who *ſpeak Evil of Dignities*, ſays, *That Angels which are greater in Power and Might bring not railing Accuſations againſt them before the Lord*; but here *St. Jude* has given us the Hiſtory to which this belongs, *Michael the Arch-Angel*, when contending with the Devil about the Body of *Moses*, durſt not bring againſt him a railing Accuſation, but ſaid, *the Lord rebuke thee*, *ſ. 9.* Theſe Inſtances ſhew that *St. Jude* did not merely copy from *St. Peter*, but had Recourſe to the Original it ſelf, where theſe Inſtances ſtood recorded, and took from thence ſuch Circumſtances as he thought proper to ſet theſe Examples in their full Light.

If we compare the different Manners of expreſſing the ſame thing in the two Epistles, we ſhall hardly imagine that *St. Peter* and *St. Jude* had the ſame Language before them to tranſcribe; 'tis much more probable that they both tranſlated from ſome old *Hebrew Book*; which will account for the Difference of Language between them, and the great

Agreement in their Images and Ideas.
The following Instance will make my
Meaning plain:

2 Peter ii. v. 6.

Καὶ πόλεις Σοδό-
μων καὶ Γομέρρας τε-
φρώσας κατατροφῇ κα-
τέκρινεν, ὑπόδειγμα
μελλόντων ἀσεβεῖν τε-
θαικώς·

Ἦ. 10. Μάλιστα ἦ
τὸς ἐπίσω σαρκὸς ἐν
ἐπιθυμίᾳ μiasμῶ πο-
ρβορμύνης, καὶ κυριότη-
τι καλαφρονῆτας, τολ-
μηαῖς, αὐθάδεις, δόξας
εἰ τρέμει βλασφημῶν-
τες·

Ἦ. 12. Οὗτοι ἦ, ὡς
ἄλογα ζῶα φυσικά,
γεγεννημένα εἰς ἄλωσιν
καὶ φθοράν, ἐν οἷς ἀγνοῶ-
σι βλασφημῶντες, ἐν
τῇ φθόρᾳ αὐτῶν, κα-
ταφθαρήσονται·

St. Jude, v. 7.

Ὡς Σόδομα καὶ Γό-
μῆρρα κ. τ. λ. παρέκλει-
νται, πυρὸς αἰωνίου
δίκην ὑπέχουσαι·

Ἦ. 8. Ὅμοιως μέν-
ται καὶ ἔστι ἐνυπνιαζό-
μενοι, σάρκα μὲν μι-
αίνουσι, κυριότητα ἦ
ἀθεῖται, δόξας ἦ βλασ-
φημῶσιν·

Ἦ. 10. Οὗτοι ἦ ὅσα
μὲν ἐκ οἶδας βλασ-
φημῶσιν ὅσα ἦ φυσι-
κῶς, ὡς τὰ ἄλογα
ζῶα, ἐπίσανται, ἐν τέ-
τοις φθείρονται·

In

In these Instances the Language of St. *Jude* is much plainer and simpler than St. *Peter's*, and represents the Meaning common to both Epistles, much more intelligibly; and whoever will be at the Pains to examine the two Epistles carefully, will find more Instances of this kind; where the Sentiments and Notions are the same, and the manners of Expression very different. Whence can proceed this Agreement and Disagreement at once? Had one transcribed the other, or had both copied from the same *Greek* Author, the Language of one Epistle would probably have answered more nearly to the Language of the other; and yet the Sentiments and Notions of the two Epistles are so much the same, that we must needs suppose the two Writers to follow one and the same Copy; and if we suppose this Copy to have been in the *Jewish* Language, and that each Writer translated for himself, this will answer the whole Appearance, and account as well for their Difference as their Agreement. The Difference, which appears in the parallel Places, last

quoted, may indeed be accounted for upon the Supposition that *St. Jude* transcribed from *St. Peter*. He might intend perhaps to make plain the abstruse Passages, and to that end might make Choice of a plainer Way of expressing himself. But the former Passages cannot be thus accounted for, which will appear if we consider further:

That the subject Matter, common to these two Epistles, was without Doubt taken from some old *Jewish* Author by one or both of these Writers. That *St. Jude* had the old Book before him, and did not merely copy after *St. Peter*, is evident, for he expressly quotes *Enoch*, meaning either a Book under that Name and Title, or, which is more probable, some antient Book of *Jewish* Traditions, in which some Prophecies of *Enoch* were recorded. *St. Jude* by telling us whence *he* had his Description of the false Prophets, has informed us, at the same time, whence *St. Peter* had the Materials of the second Chapter of his second Epistle; which is the very same Description, with such Varieties, as have already been observed.

ferred. It is very remarkable, that, notwithstanding this great Agreement between the two Epistles, *St. Peter* has an Instance not to be found in *St. Jude*; and *St. Jude* has another not to be found in *St. Peter*. *St. Jude* quotes the Prophecy of *Enoch*, of which *St. Peter* says nothing; *St. Peter* refers to the *Preaching* of *Noah*, of which *St. Jude* says nothing: Supposing one to be a mere Transcriber of the other, 'tis hard to account for this Variation; especially, considering that the Preaching referred to by *St. Peter*, under the Name of *Noah*, and the Prophecy referred to by *St. Jude*, under the Name of *Enoch*, relate to one and the same thing, the Destruction of the old World. But if you will suppose both Apostles to use an antient *Jewish* Book, in which the Prophecies of *Enoch* and *Noah*, relating to the Flood, were recorded, 'tis easy to account for the Reference to *Noah* by *St. Peter*, to *Enoch* by *St. Jude*.

This may serve to account for the different Styles in *St. Peter's* two Epistles, observed of old: I add, and for the Difference of Style, in the second Epistle it-

self, for the Style of the second Chapter is no more like to that of the other two, than it is to that of the first Epistle. When a Man expresses his own Sentiments, he writes in its own proper Style, be it what it will; but when he translates from another, he naturally follows the Genius of the Original, and adopts the Figures and Metaphors of the Author before him. The *Eastern* Languages abound in high swelling Ways of Expression; and you may find in this one Chapter of St. *Peter*, more Resemblance of this Manner, than in any other Part of the new Testament; which is a further Confirmation of the Account which I have given.

But if this will help to clear one Difficulty, will it not necessarily subject this second Epistle of St. *Peter* to another? It is an old Objection against the Authority of St. *Jude's* Epistle, that he quotes the spurious Book of *Enoch*, and, for this very Reason, * his Epistle was placed

* Judas frater Jacobi parvam, quæ de septem Catholicis est, Epistolam reliquit. Et quia de Libro Enoch, qui Apocryphus est, in eo assumpsit testimonium, à pie-riusq; rejicitur. Tamen auctoritatem vetustate jam & usu iniecit, & inter Sanctas Scripturas computatur. *Hieron. Catalog. Scrip. Eccl.*

among the ἀντιλεγόμενα, or doubtful, by the Antients. And is not *Peter's* second Epistle become liable to the very same Charge?

I will not trouble the Reader with a long Account, or any Account of the spurious Book under the Name of *Enoch*, which made a very early Appearance in the Christian Church, and is quoted by *Irenæus*, *Origen*, and others about the same Time. Whoever pleases to know the State of this Book, may consult *Fabricsius*, in his *Codex Pseud. Vet. Test.* But,

'Tis no Wonder that some antient Christians who took it for granted, that *St. Jude* quoted the same Book, which they had under the Name of *Enoch*, made it an Objection against the Authority of his Epistle. For this Book *Enoch* was a mere Romance, and full of the idle Inventions of some Hellenistick Jew. But then, there is not the least Evidence that this spurious Book was extant in the Days of the Apostles; nor indeed any kind of Proof that *St. Jude* quotes a Book called *Enoch*; it is more likely that he quoted

some antient Book containing the Traditions of the *Jewish* Church which has been long since lost; and probably contained many things relating to other antient Patriarchs and Prophets, as well as to *Enoch*. The Loss of which was miserably supplied by forging Books under the Names of the Patriarchs: To this we owe the *Life of Adam*, the *Book of Seth*, the *Testaments of the Patriarchs*, and many others of the like Nature, which were spread abroad in very early Days of the Church.

What the true antient Book was, which St. *Jude* quoted, by whom penned, or what Authority it had in the *Jewish* Church, no Mortal can tell: This only we know, it was not among their *canonical* Books. But let the Book be supposed to have been of as little Authority as you please, yet if it contained a good Description of the ancient false Prophets, why might not St. *Peter* and St. *Jude* make use of that Description, as well as St. *Paul* quote Heathen Poets? St. *Peter* plainly makes no other Use of it, and therefore stands clear of countenancing the Authority

rity of the Book: St *Jude* goes further, and quotes a Prophecy out of it, as being an authentick one: and can you tell that it was not an authentick Prophecy? I am sure the Prophecy itself, as reported in St. *Jude's* Epistles, was well founded, and was duly accomplished; and is in truth but the very Prophecy which came from God to *Noah*; and very probably had been communicated before to *Enoch* and by him to the old World. Was it ever made an Objection against the Authority of St. *Paul's* second Epistle to *Timothy*, that he quotes some antient Apocryphal Book for the Story of *Jannes* and *Jambres*? Or is it any Diminution to the Authority of the Gospel, that our Saviour (as many learned think) quotes another such Book, under the Title of the *Wisdom of God*, * and appeals to it, as containing antient Prophecies? If not, how comes it to be an Objection against St. *Jude's* Epistle, that he quotes a Prophecy of *Enoch* from the like Authority?

For these Reasons, little regard is due to the Objection of the Antients, against

* Luke xi. 49.

the Authority of St. *Jude's* Epistle: They supposed their spurious extravagant Book *Enoch*, to be the Book quoted by St. *Jude*; and they reasoned upon this Supposition; for which in the mean time, there was not the least Appearance of Proof, or Evidence; and the Epistle itself was universally received in the Churches, notwithstanding this Piece of Criticism, as we are inform'd by St. *Jerom*, in the Passage before quoted.

There are indeed some Notions in which these two Epistles agree, and which could not possibly be drawn from any antient *Jewish* Book; for these Notions, of which I now speak, are *Christian* Notions peculiar to the Times of the Gospel.

The Passages which shew this Agreement, are these chiefly which follow:

2 Peter ii.

Jude.

Ν. Ι. Ὑδδοδιδάσκα-
λοι, οἵτινες παρὰ σάξουσιν
αἰρέσεως ἀπωλείας, καὶ

Ν. 4. Παρειέδυσαν
γάρ τινες ἄνθρωποι, —
ἀσεβεῖς, τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν
χάραν

τ' ἀγρεύσαντα αὐτὰς
δεσπότῳ ἀρνέμεται.

χάριν μετὰτιθέντες εἰς
ἀτέλειαν, ἢ τ' μόνον
δεσπότῳ Θεῷ ἢ Κέ-
ρμον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστὸν
ἀρνέμεται.

Υ. 13. Σπίλοι καὶ
μῶμαι, ἐπιρροφῶντες ἐν
τῇ ἀπάταις αὐτῶν, συ-
νδωχέμενοι ὑμῖν.

Υ. 12. Οὗτοι εἰσιν
ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃς ὑμῶν
σπιλάδες, ζωδιαχέ-
μενοι.

Ch. iii. 2, 3. Μνη-
σθῆναι τὴν προειρημέων
ῥημάτων ὑπὸ τῇ αἰγίῳ
προφητῶν, καὶ τῇ ἀπο-
στόλων ἡμῶν ἐντολῇ, τῷ
Κυρίῳ καὶ σωτῇ ἡμῶν. Τῷ
πρῶτον γινώσκοντες,
ὅτι ἐλθούσῃ ἐπ' ἐσχά-
της τῇ ἡμερῶν ἐμπαΐκῃ,
καὶ τὰς ἰδίας αὐτῶν
ἐπιθυμίας πορευόμενοι.

Υ. 17, 18. Ὑμεῖς δ',
ἀγαπήσει, μνήσθητε τὴν
ῥημάτων τὴν προειρημέ-
ων ὑπὸ τῇ ἀποστόλων
τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ
Χριστῷ. Ὅτι ἔλεγον
ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐν ἐσχάτῳ χρό-
νῳ ἔσονται ἐμπαΐκταις
καὶ τὰς ἐαυτῶν ἐπιθυμί-
ας πορευόμενοι τῇ ἀσε-
βείᾳ.

In the first of these Passages, the Πα-
ρεισέδυσαν of St. Jude has a plain Resem-
blance and Reference to the Παρεισάξουσιν
of St. Peter; both Words are formed
upon the same Notion, and are meant to
describe the Craft and subtle Insinuation
of

of the new false Teachers. The turning *χάριν εἰς ἀπολείαν* in St. *Jude*, answers the *αἰρέσεις ἀπωλείας* in St. *Peter*; and for the rest, the Passages are nearly the same, and refer to Gospel Notions.

If the second Passage of St. *Peter* be read, as it ought to be, according to the *Alexandrian* Manuscript, which has *ἀγάπαις* instead of *ἀπάταις*, it agrees exactly with St. *Jude*'s; and the Feasts peculiar to *Christians* are meant in both Places. The third Passage relates to the Apostles of *Christ*; and it is the principal Passage to incline one to think that St. *Jude* had St. *Peter*'s Epistle before him; for he seems to take what is proper to his own Purpose, and the Subject of his Epistle; and to leave that which has a peculiar Reference, to the former Part of St. *Peter*'s Epistle, and to which there is nothing in his own to answer: St. *Peter* in the first Chapter of this second Epistle, and likewise in his first Epistle, tells the *Christians* of the *antient Prophecies*, fore-shewing the Deliverance near at Hand: He warns them likewise against the *new false Teachers* in this second Epistle; Therefore

Therefore collecting the Purpose of his Epistles, he says that he wrote to them to remind them, 1. *Of the Words which were spoken before by the holy Prophets:* 2. *And of the Command of the Apostles;* which Command respected the Scoffers in the last Days. But St. Jude, who had said nothing of the antient Prophecies, and had spent his whole Epistle in describing the Iniquity of the false Teachers, reminds them only of the *Words spoken by the Apostles of Christ Jesus*, who had, together with the Doctrine delivered to them, forewarned them, that *there should be Mockers in the last Time.*

I see no Inconvenience in supposing that St. Jude had as well the Epistle of St. Peter, as the old Jewish Book, which contained the Description of the ancient false Prophets and the Prophecy of *Enoch* concerning them, before him at the same Time. If these last Passages prove that he had St. Peter's Epistle, his express quoting of *Enoch* shews that he had the other. In following the old Book, and enlarging from thence the Instances made use of by St. Peter, and expressing in Words of his own the Sentiments of the original

ginal Author, without confining himself to the Version of *St. Peter*, he did no more than is natural for any Man to do in a like Case. But perhaps there may be another Account to be given of this Agreement between these two Epistles, by referring them to some further common Source or Original.

St. Jude calls upon the *Christians* to whom he wrote, to remember τῶν ῥημάτων προειρημένων ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀποστόλων ἔς Κυρίαν ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστόν; *The Words which were spoken before of the Apostles of Christ*. They, who do not place *St. Jude* in the Number of Apostles, are under no Difficulty here; it was natural for one of a lower Rank to refer to the Authority and Predictions of *Christ's* Apostles. But what must we say for *St. Peter*, who makes the same Appeal, and was undoubtedly an Apostle of *Christ* himself? Did he think that he had less Authority, or was less to be regarded than other Apostles? Or for what Reason did he appeal to that Authority in others, which he had Right to insist on himself? This Matter is something mended by our *English* Version, *Be mind-*
ful

ful — of the Commands of US, the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour. But the Order of the Words in our *Greek* Copies will not bear this rendring; τ'Αποστόλων ἡμῶν: to answer our Version we must read ἡμῶν τ'Αποστόλων: Thus St. *Paul* often speaks, ἐγὼ Παῦλος, *I Paul*: but never Παῦλος ἐγὼ, *Paul I*. And since there is evidently a Dislocation of the Word ἡμῶν in St. *Peter*, and it must be placed elsewhere, it ought probably to be placed, as St. *Jude* has placed it, after *Kυρίῃ*: and then the *English* Version must be thus — *The Commandment of the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour.*

There must be something particular in this Case; otherwise, for an Apostle to appeal to the Authority of Apostles, as something superior to his own, is not very natural. But if we suppose that the Apostles had a Meeting upon this great Case of the *new false Teachers*, and that they gave jointly, by common Consent and Deliberation, *Precepts* proper to the Occasion, to be communicated to all Churches, no single Apostle wou'd, or cou'd, in this Case, call the common Injun-

tion *his Commandment*, but wou'd certainly call it, in the Language of *St. Peter*, *the Commandment of the Apostles of our Lord*. *St. Paul* was an Apostle, yet was it no Disparagement to him to carry the Decree of the Council of *Jerusalem* to the Churches of his Plantation; and, in writing, or speaking, he could not but have called it the *Decree of the Apostles*. The Case might be the same here.

We have some Evidence to shew that this was the Case. That there was such a Tradition, at least, in the Church, is evident from the *Apostolical Constitutions*: In which there is mention made of a Meeting of the Apostles upon the very Account of these false Teachers, so particularly described by *St. Peter* and *St. Jude*. In the thirteenth Chapter of the sixth Book, these false Teachers are described to be such as, *πολεμεῖσι Χριστῷ ἢ Μωσῇ*, *fight against Christ and Moses*, pretending, at the same time, to value both: And thus the false Teachers, mentioned in both Epistles, communicated with the Church, whilst they corrupted its Faith: They were, *ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ πικλᾶδες*, *Spots in the Churches*

Churches Feasts, Jude, *ſ. 12.* They are ordered to be expelled in the Apostolical Constitutions that the Lambs might be preserved ὑγιαῖν καὶ ἁσπιλα, *Sound and without Spot.* They are represented in the Apostolical Constitutions, *as the false Christians and false Prophets foretold in the Gospel.* — Θεὸν βλασφημεῖς, καὶ τὸν ὡς καὶ πατέρα; which agrees exactly with St. *Jude's* Account of them, — that they had been foretold by the Apostles, and that they *denied the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. ſ. 4.* And with St. *Peter's* likewise, — *Who bring in damnable Heresies, denying the Lord that bought them*, Chap. ii. *ſ. 1.*

At this Meeting, 'tis said, Instructions were given to be communicated to all Churches by their respective Apostles and Bishops; there were probably then many circular Letters sent upon this Occasion; the second Epistle of St. *Peter* and St. *Jude's* Epistle seem to be of this sort; and being drawn upon the same Occasion, and upon the same Instructions, 'tis no Wonder they agree so well together.

There are in the Epistles themselves some Marks which confirm the foregoing Account: The very Word [ἐντολῆς] used by St. *Peter*, when he makes mention of the Apostles Authority, points out some particular and distinguished Precept: For he does not seem to refer to the general Preaching, or Doctrines of the Apostles, but to some *special Command*, or Form of Doctrine relating to the false Teachers. This is that ἐντολὴ παραδοθεῖσα mentioned in the Close of the foregoing Chapter, *the Commandment delivered to the Faithful*, to guard them against the Corruptions of the false Teachers, and to shew them τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς δικαιοσύνης, *The Way of Righteousness*. This Warning, so solemnly given, would, as the Apostle insists, be an Aggravation in the Case of all such as having been made *thus* acquainted with the Way of Righteousness, should nevertheless turn aside ἐκ τῆς παραδοθείσης αὐτοῖς ἀγίας ἐντολῆς: *From the holy Commandment delivered unto them*.

St. *Jude* plainly says that his Epistle was wrote purely upon the Account of the false Teachers: That his Intentions were

were to have written to them, *πρὸς τὴν κοινὴν σωτηρίαν*, of the common Doctrines of Salvation; but that he had quitted the Design being *necessitated* (*ἀνάγκη ἔχειν*) to write to them to strive for the Faith delivered to the Saints, in opposition to the false Teachers who had stollen in among them.

The Sense of this Passage is lost in our Translation, as it is likewise in both the Interpretations proposed by *Erasmus*, upon the Place, in which he has been followed by most of those, who came after him. Interpreters have been misled by confounding the *κοινὴ σωτηρία*, and the *παραδοθεῖσα πᾶσις* together, as if they meant one and the same thing; whereas they mean quite different Things. The *common Salvation*, here spoken of, means the Doctrines of the Gospel published to all the World without respect to Difference of Times or Seasons, or to particular Doctrines of the Corrupters of the Faith: The *παραδοθεῖσα πᾶσις*, is the same with the *παραδοθεῖσα ἑνολή* in *St. Peter*, the *Form of sound Doctrine*, sent to all the Churches, by Direction of the Apo-

stles, in opposition to the false Teachers. This then is the Meaning of St. *Jude*, and thus it may be paraphrased: “ Beloved, “ I was intent upon the Design of writ- “ ing to you upon the common Doc- “ trines and Hopes of the Gospel, for the “ Improvement of your Faith and Know- “ ledge in *Christ Jesus*; but I find my “ self obliged to lay aside this Design, “ and to warn you against a present Dan- “ ger, to exhort you to earnestness in “ contending for that true Doctrine once “ already delivered to you and all the “ Faithful, in Opposition to the false “ Teachers, who are crept in unawares “ among you ” — .

The *Arabick* and *Ethiopick* Versions have both preserved this Sense in some Measure; the *Arabick* comes very near the true Meaning; the Sense of which the *Latin* Interpreter has thus expressed, *O dilecti mei, omni Studio adhibito ut scriberem vobis de salute perfecta universali, atque communi, coactus sum scribere vobis, deprecans ut solliciti sitis in fide quæ semel tradita est sanctis.* The *Ethiopick* Version speaks of this Faith
once

once delivered to the Saints as super-added to the common Teaching, and consequently as distinct from the κοινὴ σωτηρία, the common Salvation.

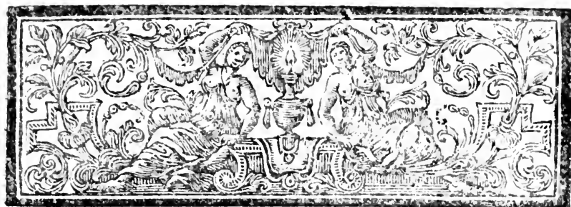
But to come nearer our Point, the Agreement of the two Epistles in the Description of the false Teachers; it is to be observed that both St. *Peter* and St. *Jude* profess to write as reminding their Churches of Things with which they had before been made acquainted. * St. *Jude* says expressly that the very Subject of this Letter had once already been known unto them: ὑπομνήται δὲ ὑμᾶς βέλομαι, εἰδότες ὑμᾶς ᾧπαξ τῷτο ὅτι ὁ κύριος λαὸν ἐκ γῆς Ἀιγύπτου, κ. τ. λ. The Word (ᾧπαξ) used here is the same we met with before; the ᾧπαξ παραδοθεῖσα πίστις, and the εἰδότες ὑμᾶς ᾧπαξ τῷτο are relative to the same matter; and it appears that the Warning against the false Teachers, and the prophetick Description of them were sent to the Churches together with the (ἐντολή) Commandment. It appears likewise that both St. *Peter* and St. *Jude*

* Compare 2 *Pet.* iii. v. 2 with *Jude* v. v. 5.

wrote their Epistles, after this Commandment had been delivered to the several Churches; for they write to them, *reminding* them of what they had before received.

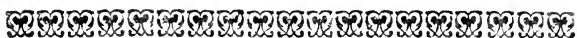
This being the Case, there is no Necessity to suppose that St. *Jude* transcribed St. *Peter's* Epistle: 'Tis much more probable that both he and St. *Peter* wrote from the common Plan communicated to the Churches; and drew their Description of the false Teachers from the same apochryphal Book. But be this as it will, yet upon all Views the second Epistle of St. *Peter* stands clear of the old Objection drawn from the Difference of Style between his first and second Epistles.





DISSERTATION II.

*The Sense of the Antients before
CHRIST upon the Circumstances
and Consequences of the Fall.*



MY Intention is not to search after Passages in Heathen Authors, which may seem to bear some Resemblance to the *Mosaick* History of the Fall, but to trace the Sense of the *Jewish* Church as far as it can be collected.

As there are no Records left, but the Books of the old Testament, to give Light to this Enquiry, and no Book of the old

Testament, after *Moses*, treats directly of this Subject; it cannot be expected that I should produce a full and regular Exposition of the Circumstances and Consequences of *the Fall*, from so few Remains, and in this respect so very imperfect. All that can be done, is to gather up the little which fell from these old Writers, rather accidentally, than purposely; and to try whether, from their References and Allusions to this History, we can with any tolerable Degree of Probability, collect their Sense, or the Sense of the Times, in which they lived, upon this Subject. The Historical Writers of the old Testament were never led within view of this antient Story, by the Occurrences in which they are concerned; from them consequently no Light is to be expected. Moral Writers had sometimes Occasion to reflect upon the State of the World, and to consider how things came into the State and Condition, in which they found them: Prophets likewise, who were Teachers of Religion, were in the same Case; from these we may expect some Assistance.

You

You see within how narrow a Compass we are reduced; but yet no Help is to be refused which can be had in so material a Concern.

The moral and theological Difficulties, relating to this point will not be stated or discussed upon the Foot of this Enquiry. It was the Wisdom of Antiquity to bury all such Difficulties, in the Abyss of infinite Wisdom and Power, and there to leave them till God should think proper to bring them to Light; and had we something of the same Spirit, it would be the better for us. But the most curious and inquisitive have no Reason to expect a Solution of all the Difficulties of this sort, from the Teachers of the Gospel. For what has the Gospel to do with them? The moral and natural Evils in the World were not *introduced* by the Gospel; why then must the Gospel be called upon to account for them, rather than any other Religion, or Sect of Philosophy? If there had never been an old Testament, never a new one, Mankind wou'd have been at least as corrupt and miserable as they are at present. What harm then have the
old

old and the new Testament done to you, that you perpetually challenge them to account to you for the Evil you suffer? You mislike perhaps the Story of *Adam* and *Eve*, and can by no Means digest the Account of the *Serpent's* tempting, and prevailing against our first Parents: Very well; let this Account then be laid aside, and what are you now the better? Is there not the *same Evil* remaining in the World, whether you believe, or believe not the Story of the Fall? And if so, what Account do YOU pretend to give of it? for if you pretend to any Religion you are as liable to be called to this Account, as any Professor or Teacher of the Gospel. No Body is exempt in this Case, but the Athiest; and his Privilege comes from hence, that he has no Account to give of any thing; for all Difficulties are alike upon this Scheme.

Leaving then these Difficulties, which are common to all Religions, and not peculiar to our present Enquiry, let us proceed to trace the History of the Fall in the antient Writers,

The oldest Book we have remaining, is the Book of *Job*; there is all the Appearance, that can arise from internal Characters, that it was written before any of the Books of *Moses*. The Testimony therefore of this Book is distinct from the Authority of *Moses*, since it was not derived from the Books of *Moses*, but was it self an original Account of the State of Nature and Religion in the old World, before *Moses* had committed any thing to Writing. I know that some have endeavoured to bring down this antient Writer to the Times of the *Babylonish* Captivity, and suppose the Book to have been written for the Consolation of the Captives in their Distress. But if you suppose it written for the sake of the *Jews*, is it not strange that there should not be in a Discourse of such a kind, one single Word of the Law of *Moses*; nor so much as one distant Allusion to any Rite or Ceremony of the Law, or any one Piece of History later than *Moses*; nor to any of the Forms of Idolatry, for which the *Jews* suffered, at the Time of their Captivity? The Conjecture would be as ingenious and

as well founded, should any Critick suppose, that the *Iliads* of *Homer* were written to celebrate the military Expeditions of the *Goths* and *Vandals*. Besides, were it proper to enter into the Discussion of this Point it might be easily shew'd that the Book of *Job* had quite another View, than this Opinion supposes. The *Patience* of *Job* is much talked of, and we seldom look further for any Use of this Book: But in Truth the Book was written in Opposition to the very antient Opinion, which introduced two independent Principles, one of Good, the other of Evil. For this Reason *Satan*, the Author of *Job's* Misfortunes, is brought in with a Permission from God to afflict *Job*; and the Moral of the History lies in *Job's* Reflection; *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*: And again, *Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and shall we not receive Evil? In all which,* as the History expressly observes, *Job did not sin with his Lips*; intimating how prone Men were to sin with their Lips, when they talked of the Evils of Life and the Author of them. The learn-
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ed *Grotius* supposes this Book to be written for the Consolation of the Descendants of *Eſau*, carried away in the *Babylonish* Captivity; he ſaw plainly, I ſuppoſe, that the Book cou'd, by no means, answer to the Case of the *Jews*, as well for the Reasons already mentioned, as for this likewise, That the *Jews* undoubtedly suffered for their Iniquity; and the Example of *Job*, is the Example of an innocent Man suffering for no Demerit of his own: Apply this to the *Jews* in their Captivity, and the Book contradicts all the Prophets, before, and at the Time of the Captivity, and is calculated to harden the *Jews* in their Sufferings, and to reproach the Providence of God. But suppose it writ for the Children of *Eſau*; they were Idolaters, and yet is there no Allusion to their Idolatry in all this Book; and what ground is there to think that *they* were *ſo righteous*, as to deserve such an Interpretation to be put upon their Sufferings as the Book of *Job* puts on them, if so be it was written for their sakes? Or can it be imagined, that a Book, writ about the Time supposed, for the

Use of an *Idolatrous* Nation, and odious to the *Jews*, cou'd ever have been received into the *Jewish* Canon? Whatever therefore we may think of the Book, in its present *State*, there is little doubt but that it was formed upon *authentick Records*, of greater Antiquity than any Book now remaining:

The Antiquity of the Book supposed, two Questions arise to be considered, 1. Whether the Fall of *Adam* was known to this antient Writer: 2. What Notion he had of the Circumstances and Consequences of the Fall:

The xxth Chapter of *Job* contains the Discourse of *Sophar* the *Naamathite*, upon the State and Condition of the Wicked: He takes his Rise from the very Beginning; His Words, in our Translation, are these: *Knowest thou not this of old, since Man was placed on the Earth, that the Triumpling of the Wicked is short, and the Joy of the Hypocrite but for a Moment? Though his Excellency mount up to the Heavens, and his Head reach unto the Clouds: Yet he shall perish for ever like his own Dung.* The first Verse might
as

as well have been rendered, *Since Adam was placed on the Earth.* There is no Reason to doubt but that this Passage refers to the Fall, and the first Sin of Man: The Date agrees——For the Knowledge here taught is said to arise from Facts as old as *the First placing Man on Earth:* The sudden Punishment of the Iniquity corresponds to the *Mosaic Account——The Triumpling of the Wicked is short, his Joy but for a Moment.* Above all, the Nature of the Crime, and of the Punishment here described, are strong Presumptions on this side: *Adam's* Ambition was to *be like God*, and he had the Tempter's Word to assure him he shou'd be so: How aptly is this Ambition described in the Passage before us? *Though his Excellency mount up to the Heavens, and his Head reach unto the Clouds:* That is (as the *Syriac* and *Arabic* Versions render the Verse) “ Though in his Pride he ascend
“ up to Heaven yet shall he perish for
“ ever.” *Adam's* Punishment was Death: *To Dust thou shalt return.* The Punishment, as described in the Book of *Job* is — *He shall perish for ever;* but how,

or in what manner? Why, *like his own Dung*; i. e. by returning to Earth again. That the *Chaldee Paraphrast* understood this whole Passage to relate to the Fall, seems evident by his Exposition of the fourth Verse, where he takes Notice of the *Accuser* or *Tempter*, as well as of the Offenders: *Gaudium impiorum finitur citò, & letitia delatoris ad momentum.* What *Delator*, or *Accuser*, do we read of at the Time of *Adam's* being placed on the Earth, except the *Tempter*? To whom the Name of the *Adversary*, or *Accuser*, was afterwards appropriated; and it is the Character, in this very Book, of the Spirit permitted to plague and torment *Job*; which is one Evidence, by the by, that the *Paraphrast* understood the same Person to have been concerned in both Cases; in the tempting of *Adam*, and in the tormenting of *Job*. Our own Version, the *Vulgate* and *Montanus's* agree in one Sense; *The Joy of the Hypocrite is but for a Moment*: But who is this *Hypocrite*, appearing at the very first placing of Man on Earth? It was neither *Eve* nor *Adam*; they were bold and

and hardly, and distrustful of God, but shewed no *Guile* or *Hypocrisy* in the whole Transaction. But the Tempter's Part was all *Hypocrisy*; he shewed great Concern for the Prosperity of those, whom he meant to destroy, and well deserves *this Character*; and the *Chaldee Paraphrast* has Reason in fixing it upon him.

The next Passage that occurs, is but a bare Allusion to one Circumstance in the History of the Fall; and that not a very material one. In the xxxi. Chapter *Job* vindicates his Integrity in many Particulars; one is, that he was ever ready to acknowledge his Errors. Upon which Occasion his Words are — *If I covered my Transgressions as Adam, by hiding my Iniquity in my Bosom.* — The marginal reading of our Bible is — *After the Manner of Men.* Other Versions give the same Sense. But the *Chaldee Paraphrase* agrees with our Translation. The Allusion to *Adam's hiding himself* is proper and apposite; but if you read, *after the Manner of Men*, the Passage is an Accusation of others, and the Vindication of himself has a Mixture of Pride

in it, which does not suit the Character of the speaker.

In the xii. Chapter *Job* magnifies the Power of God in making and disposing all things: At *Y. 16.* we have these remarkable Words: *With him is Strength and Wisdom, the Deceived and the Deceiver are his.* If nothing more is meant by this, than that the *cunning Man*, as well as the *weak Man*, is under the Power of God, 'tis an Observation that needed not to have been prefaced with an exprefs Declaration of God's *great Wisdom and Power*; nor should it be placed, as it is, among the greatest Works of Providence; the Creation of the World; the destroying it by a Flood; the settling and enlarging the Nations of the Earth, and straitning them again: In the midst of these great Accounts of Providence stands this Observation, *the Deceived and the Deceiver are his.* This therefore must be something, relating to the general Condition of Mankind; and must be understood to be an Instance of God's Providence, in the great Affairs of the World. And for this Reason 'tis very probable

probable, that the Words were meant of the Fall of Man through the cunning of the Tempter. It was directly to the Purpose of the Book of *Job* to assert and maintain the Superiority of God over the *Deceiver*, who, by this very Means of bringing Evil into the World, had grown up, in the Opinion of many, into a Rival of the Power and Majesty of God.

There is anothe Passage, in this Book of *Job*, very like to the Former; which, considered and compared with it, will leave little room to doubt of its true Meaning. The Passage I mean, is in Chap. xxvi. They are the Words of *Job*: *By his Spirit he (God) hath garnished the Heavens; his Hand hath formed the crooked Serpent*. How come these disagreeable Ideas to be joined together? How comes the forming of *a crooked Serpent* to be mentioned, as an Instance of Almighty Power, and to be set, as it were, upon an equal Foot with the Creation of the Heavens, and all the Host of them? Read the whole Chapter; all the Images there of divine Power are great and magnificent: *Hell (we are told) is naked before God;*

and Destruction hath no covering; He stretcheth out the North over the empty Place, and hangeth the Earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the Waters in his thick Clouds, and the Cloud is not rent under them — He hath compassed the Waters with Bounds, until the Day and Night come to an end. The Pillars of Heaven tremble, and are astonished at his Reproof. He divideth the Sea with his Power, and by his Understanding he smiteth thro' the Proud: By his Spirit the Heavens are garnished; his Hand formed the crooked Serpent. Can you possibly imagine that the forming the crooked Serpent, in this Place, means no more, than that God created Snakes and Adders? This surely cannot be the Case!

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If we consider the State of Religion in the World, when this Book was penned, it will help to clear this Matter up. The oldest Notion, in Opposition to the Supremacy of the Creator, is that of two independent Principles, as has been already observed: And the only kind of Idolatry mentioned in the Book of *Job* (and it was of all others the antientest) is the

Worship

Worship of the Sun and Moon, and heavenly Host; from this *Job* vindicates himself, *Chap. xxxi. If I beheld the Sun when it shined, or the Moon walking in brightness: And my Heart hath been secretly enticed, or my Mouth hath kissed my Hand: This also were an Iniquity to be punished by the Judge: For I S H O U' D have denied the God that is above.* Suppose now *Job* to be acquainted with the Fall of Man, and the Part ascribed to the *Serpent* in the Introduction of Evil, and see how aptly the Parts do cohere. In Opposition to the Idolatrous Practice of his Time, he asserts God to be the Maker of all the Host of Heaven — *By his Spirit hath he garnished the Heavens:* In Opposition to the false Notion of two independent Principles, he asserts God to be Maker of him, who was the first Author of Evil: *His Hand hath formed the crooked Serpent.* You see how properly the *Garnishing of the Heavens*, and the *Forming of the Serpent*, are joined together.

That this was the antient traditionary Explication of this Place, we have unde-

niable Evidence from the Translation of the Seventy; who render the latter Part of this Verse, which relates to the *Serpent*, in this manner, προσάγματι ὃ ἐθανάτωσε δράκοντα ἀπώστειλον. *By a Decree he destroyed the apostate Dragon*: The *Syriac* and *Arabic* Versions are to the same Sense. These Translators applied the Place to the Punishment inflicted on the *Serpent*; and it comes to the same Thing; for the punishing the *Serpent*, is as clear an Evidence of God's Power over the Author of Evil, as the creating him.

The old Commentator upon *Job*, printed among the Works of St. *Jerom*, tho' he chiefly pursues a mystical Sense, yet has left us a plain intimation how he understood these Words — *Educitur ab eis (i. e. ab animabus Sanctis) & de cordibus earum excluditur ille, in quo nihil est rectum, COLUBER TORTUOSUS.*

We need not wonder to see so much concern in this Book of *Job*, to maintain the Supremacy of God, and to guard it against every false Notion; for this was the Theme, the Business of the Author. He gives, as it were, and Epitome of his
Design

Design, in these remarkable Words delivered by *Job*. *God is wise in Heart, and mighty in Strength: It be hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?*
ix. 4.

The mention of the *Serpent*, in this manner, in the Book of *Job*, is the more to be regarded, because, this Book being, as I conceive, older than the *Mosaic History*, it is an evident Proof that the Account of *Moses* is the antient Account of the Fall; and not a Story dressed up by himself, to serve any particular Ends or Purposes.

But let us proceed to consider, what Notions this Writer had of the Consequences of the Fall, and of the State of the World after it. The general Corruption of the World has been observed in all Times, and 'tis not worth the while to be particular in proving, that this antient Writer had the same Sense, which others had of the Condition of Mankind. He mentions the Flood; *the overturning the Earth by Waters*, as he styles it; but this too is an uncontested Piece of History. One Observation he has, which

deserves our Regard, That all the Works of Nature are prepared by God to be his Instruments, either for Judgment, or for Mercy: Of the *Clouds*, he says, they are made, *to do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the Face of the World in the Earth. He causeth it to come, whether for Correction, or for his Land, or for Mercy*, xxxvii. 12, 13. *The Treasures of Snow and Hail are reserved against the Time of Trouble, against the Day of Battle and War*, xxviii. 23. It seems not improbable to me, that these Reflexions arose from the Methods made use of by Providence (not worn out of Memory in this Writer's Time) in punishing the old World, in Consequence of the Curse laid upon the Ground. Such Methods they are, by which the Ground may, at any time, be cursed, and the Toil and Labour of Men increased, to what degree God thinks fit. And 'tis to be noted, that the Blessing promised to *Noah*, upon the Restoration of the Earth, is expressed by the regular Successions that should continue, from that time, of *Seed-time and Harvest, Cold*
and

and Heat, Summer and Winter; which is but a Promise, in other Words, that the Hail and Snow, and the Waters of Heaven, shou'd be no longer Instruments of Judgment, but of Mercy. In the xxxviiith Chapter, God is introduced, setting forth his own great Works of Wisdom and Power; he laid the Foundations of the Earth; he shut up the Sea with Doors; he commanded the Morning and the Day-spring: After which it follows; From the Wicked their Light is withholden. This Passage might be thought to allude to the Egyptian Darknefs, did it not refer to a much older Date, and stand among the earliest of God's Works, as an Instance of his Power from the Beginning. The same Reflexion occurs in this Writer more than once, it is mentioned again, Chap. ix. and number'd among the Judgments of God: He commandeth the Sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the Stars. Again, Chap. xxxvi. after mention of the Clouds, and of Light, it follows, By them judgeth he the People. To what antient Piece of History do all these Allusions refer? We have nothing remaining upon
Record,

Record, to which the Application may be made. This only I find, that when God restored the Earth, and gave his Blessing to *Noah*, one Promise is, *That Day and Night shall not cease*: A strong Intimation that Clouds and Darkness, Storms and Tempests had greatly prevailed before, for the Punishment of the old World. These Expressions, you'll say perhaps, were used in the *Eastern* Countries metaphorically: 'Tis true, I find them so used in this very Book of *Job*, Ch. xxii. 11. But what was the Foundation of the Metaphor? Metaphors do not arise out of nothing; and there was some reason why *sealing up of Stars, and darkning the Sun*, were Expressions made use of to denote a State of Sorrow and Distress. *Job's* Affliction is described by one of his Friends, in this manner; *Sudden Fear troubleth thee; or Darkness that thou canst not see; and abundance of Waters cover thee*. The first Expression is plain; the second and third are metaphorical. Why the Judgments of God are represented by the overwhelming of Waters, every Man may understand who knows the History of the Flood.

Flood. But how will you account for the second Metaphor? Or why is he said to be *without the Sun*, who suffers under Trouble or Affliction in this Life? In this manner *Job* himself complains: *The Days of Affliction prevented me, I went mourning without the Sun*, xxx. 28. The same Figure is applied in like manner by the Prophet *Amos* — *Seek him — that turneth the Shadow of Death into the Morning, and maketh the Day dark with Night*, Amos v. 8. And again, *I will cause the Sun to go down at Noon, and I will darken the Earth in the clear Day, and I will turn your Feasts into Mourning, and all your Songs into Lamentation*, viii. 9. So the Prophet *Joel*; *The Day of the Lord cometh — a Day of Darknefs and of Gloominefs — The Sun and the Moon shall be dark, and the Stars shall withdraw their Shining*, Joel ii. 1, 2, 10. And the Prophet *Isaiab*; *The Stars of Heaven and the Constellations thereof shall not give their Light; the Sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the Moon shall not cause her Light to shine. And I will punish the World for their*
Evils,

Evils, and the Wicked for their Iniquity, Isa. xiii. 10, 11. But this is not a very material Point, and therefore I need not enlarge on it.

As to the Origin of the general Corruption and Depravity of Mankind, this antient Author seems to suppose, that all Men are corrupt by Descent and Inheritance: *What is Man that he should be clean? and he which is born of a Woman that he should be righteous?* Job xv, 14. The same Question is asked again, *Job* xxv. 4. In both these Places there may be some Reason perhaps to think, that *Uncleanness* is charg'd upon Man *comparatively* only, and with respect to the transcendent Purity of God; which is a very different thing from the *Uncleanness* derived from the Fall. But there is another Passage which will not admit of this Construction: In Chapter xiv. *Job* represents the miserable Condition of Man; *Man that is born of a Woman, is of few Days and full of Trouble; He cometh forth like a Flower and is cut down; he fleeth also as a Shadow, and continueth not.* Upon this Representati-
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on he expostulates his Case with God; *Dost thou open thine Eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into Judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* These last Words plainly refer to the first; and shew the Ground of the other Expostulations; *What is Man, that he should be clean? and he that is born of a Woman that he should be righteous?* For in this xivth Chapter the Question is not, whether a Man is pure compared to God, but whether he has Purity enough left, in his present State, to make him a fit Object of Judgment. This seems to be the Sense of *Job's Expostulation*; “Why art thou extreme to
“mark all my Errors; is it reasonable to
“expect Purity of a Man born of a Wo-
“man, who is by the very Condition of
“his Birth unclean?” I shall be easily persuaded that *Job* had not entered into all the Niceties relating to this Point, but I shall not easily believe, that he charged God foolishly, by imputing Uncleaness to the Works of his Creation. For tell me upon what Ground this Expostulation stands, *How shall Man be clean that is*
born

born of a Woman? Why not clean? Did God make *Woman* or Man, *unclean* at the Beginning? If he did, the Expostulation would have been more apposite, and much stronger, had the true Cause been assigned, and *Job* had said “How canst thou expect Cleanness in Man, whom thou createdst unclean?” But as the Case now stands, the Expostulation has a plain Reference to the Introduction of *Vanity* and *Corruption*, by the *Sin* of the *Woman*; and is an evidence, that this antient Writer was sensible of the evil Consequences of the Fall upon the whole Race of Man. *Moses* tells us *Adam* begat a Son in his own Likeness, after his Image; and *St. Paul*, That we have born the Image of the earthy; the Notion is the same as expressed by *Job*, *Can a clean thing come out of an unclean?*

There is still a very material Question behind; namely, what Hope or Expectation had this antient Writer of a Deliverance from the Evil and Corruption, which prevailed over the whole Race of Man?

In answer to this Question, I observe in the first Place; that the Argument of this

this whole Book supposes a Man to be *accountable* to his Maker for the Good or Evil of his Actions. This Point is not disputed between *Job* and his Friends; they differ widely sometimes in their Notions of God's Method of Justice towards Men, but 'tis an allowed Principle on all Sides, that God is Man's Judge, as well as his Maker. 2. That the Wicked often prosper in this World, and go down in Peace to the Grave, is a Proposition maintained by *Job* in many Places; but particularly and fully in Chap. xxi. Let us see then whether his Conclusion be agreeable to these Premises.

In the xivth Chapter, *Job* pleads his Cause with God, reminding him of the infirm State and Condition of Man: *He cometh up as a Flower, and is cut down. — He giveth up the Ghost, and where is he? — He lieth down, and riseth not till the Heavens be no more.* The Question here asked, *Where is he?* May import that *Job* did not suppose Death to be the final Destruction of Man. A like Passage we find, Chap. xiv. *I have said to Corruption, thou art my Father; to the Worm, thou*

thou art my Mother and my Sister. And where is now my Hope? As for my Hope who shall see it? Not the Men of this Generation, for *they shall go down to the Bars of the Pit, when our Rest together is in the Dust.* But such Questions do sometimes amount to Negatives. Where is he? No where. What is my Hope? Nothing. Their determinate Sense therefore must be collected from the Context. — When a Man gives up the Ghost, *where is he?* The Meaning of which Question is explained in the following Words, for *Man lieth down, and riseth not till the Heavens be no more.* Where is he then, or what is he in the intermediate Space? You may reply perhaps, that this Expression, *'till the Heavens be no more,* may very well signify, that Man shall never rise more; and to shew the contrary, it ought at least to be proved, that *Job* had a Notion that the Heavens should one Day be destroyed, and that new Heavens and a new Earth should succeed. But if this Expression be doubtful in it self, yet 'tis reasonable to expound it to the Sense, which antient Tradition

dition best supports. And this we certainly know from Writers both sacred and prophane, that it was a very old Opinion, that the present Frame of Nature should be one Day dissolved, and be succeeded by a Renovation of all things, by new Heavens and a new Earth. And therefore *Vatablus*, a very learned and judicious Commentator, makes no Doubt of referring this Passage to *Job's* Expectation of a *Resurrection* in the Day of God's Visitation. This Exposition is supported by another famous Passage, made familiar to us, by being a part of our burial Office; *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth; and though after my Skin, worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for my self, and mine Eyes shall behold and not another, though my Reins be consumed within me*, xix. 25, &c. Many worthy and learned Men have understood this Place of a temporal Deliverance, expected by *Job*: The late pious and worthy Bishop of *Ely*, Dr. *Patrick*, particularly, has followed this Sense in his *Paraphrase*

on the *Book of Job*. What he says upon the 26th Verse, will shew his Meaning perfectly, and therefore I need transcribe no more: His Paraphrase is this; *And though the Worms, which have eaten my Skin, should proceed to consume the rest of this wretched Body; yet I feel my Soul inspired with a comfortable Belief, that before I die I shall see my self restored, by the Mercy of God, to a happy Estate.* Job's Condition indeed was such, that the Description in the Text, (*though after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body*) will suit his Case exactly, and we cannot necessarily collect, from the Expression only, that he thought of the Corruption of the Grave: The other Expression (*In my Flesh shall I see God*) may likewise signify *his seeing God* before he put off his Flesh, *i. e.* before he died. And there is still another Reason, which has often weighed with me on the Side of this Exposition, which is this; That if we expound this Passage in *Job* of a *future Resurrection*, it contains a Degree of Knowledge in this great Mystery, beyond the Proportion of Light communicated to the
Age

Age in which he lived. *Moses* has no such express Promise or Prophecy, nor is there any Evidence that the *Jewish* Church for many Ages had such Knowledge. 'Tis the peculiar Character of our Saviour, *That he brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel*; and yet what do we know from the Gospel, more than is contained in this Passage, if it is indeed a Description of a *future Resurrection*, to be brought to Light by a Redeemer, *who shall stand upon the Earth at the latter Day*? These Reasons, I imagine, inclined the *Jewish* Interpreters to confine the Sense of this Passage to a temporal Deliverance only. For should they admit a future Resurrection to be here intended, how would it consist with the Preference they give to themselves, above all other Nations, in the Knowledge of Religion? Can they easily be persuaded, do you think, that *Job*, who was an *Alien from the Commonwealth of Israel*, had a clearer and more distinct Knowledge of this great Mystery, than God thought fit to reveal to the *Jewish* Church? Besides, this Description in the Book of *Job*, ad-

mitting that it relates *at all* to a future Resurrection, is so consonant to the Doctrine of the Gospel, and is indeed so strong a *Prophecy* of the Office and Character of *Christ Jesus*, that 'tis no more to be expected of a *Jew*, that he should see and acknowledge *this Sense* of the Passage, than that he should subscribe to the Interpretation of other antient Prophecies, in the Sense, in which they are applied in the new Testament. 'Tis strange to me to observe what Stress the very learned *Grotius* lays upon the Consent of the *Jewish* Interpreters in this Case: *they are*, says he, *inquisitive after every thing, that may with any Appearance be applyed to the Resurrection; but this Passage of Job they never so apply.* And Reason good; the *Jews* without Doubt would be glad to find in their own Law, whatever appears to them to be excellent in the Gospel, that they may shew the little Need there was for the Gospel Revelation. But would they be equally glad to find clearer Knowledge of divine Truth among the antient *Arabians*, than among the Descendents of *Abraham*? Or to see a

plain prophetic Description of the *grand Article* of the *Gospel*, even before the giving of their own Law?

The same learned Person has another Objection against those, who interpret *this Passage* of a Resurrection. He thinks, with others to whom he refers, that they all depart from the *original Hebrew*: (*coacti sunt in versionibus suis multum ab Hebræo discedere*). 'Tis happy, that this learned Hand has given us, what he judges to be, the true Sense of the Passage; for it shews that no just Interpretation or Translation can be given of these Words, which will exclude the Notion of a Resurrection. *Grotius* his own Sense expressed according to the *Original*, is so far from shutting out this Notion, that it can hardly be made to agree with any thing else *. For what do those Words mean, *Mine Eye shall behold and not another,*
(*hiscæ*

* Hebræa sic sonant: Scio ego Redemptorem meum vivere, & illum postremo staturum in campo. Etiam si non pellem tantum meam, sed & hoc (nempe arvinam quæ sub pelle est) consumerent (morti scilicet) in carne tamen mea Deum videbo (i. e. propitium experiar). Ego, inquam, hisce meis oculis: Ego, non autem aliis prome.
— Deus Redemptor dicitur, quia pios ex multis malis

(*hifce oculis meis: ego, non autem alius pro me*). If *Job's* Thought was that he should be reſtored to his former Health and Proſperity in this Life, why does he guard againſt the Suſpicion that it might be *another*, and not *himſelf* who ſhould be reſtored? Had he ever ſeen a Tranſmutation of *Persons* in this World, or heard of any Man who ceaſed to be *himſelf*, and became *another*? Diſeaſes may waſte the Body, and often do, to a great Degree; but we never are afraid that they will deſtroy the *Perſon*, or change the Man. What is it then that *Job* guards againſt? If you apply *this Paſſage* to the Reſurrection, this Circumſtance, *that he himſelf, and not another for him ſhould ſee God*, is the moſt expreſſive of his Hope. Death, to all Appearance, deſtroys the Perſon, the whole Man; and though poſſibly there may be a Renovation of the World, yet ſtill 'tis difficult to conceive

liberat. *Pſ.* lxxviii. 35. *Eſa.* x'i. 14. xlii. 14. x'iv. 6. xlvii. 4. *Poſtremum in campo flare eſt victoris, ſic Deum dicit victorem fore adverſariorum ſuorum. Neque verò ei eſſe impoſſibile corpus ejus putredine propè exuſum reſtituere in priorem formam; quod & fecit Deus. Grotius in Locum.*

how

how individual Persons shall be so preserved, through all the Changes of many Ages, as at the last Day to find themselves to be *themselves* again.

But further; the Words in the Original which we render, *he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth*, are in *Grotius's* Translation thus expressed, *illum postremo staturum in campo*; by which he means, *he shall keep the Field*, (*quod victoris est*) which is a Mark of Conquest. Allow this, and what do they suffer, who apply this Passage to the Resurrection? The restoring Life to the World is represented as the greatest *Victory* and *Triumph*; *St. Paul* says, *Christ must reign till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet; the last Enemy that shall be destroyed is Death*. The Expression therefore, as expounded by *Grotius*, has nothing inconsistent with an Application of the whole Passage to the Resurrection.

But the original Word *Haphar* is never used, that I can find, to signify *a Field*; much less *a Field of Battle*; and I very much question whether *keeping the Field* was an Expression of *Victory*,

of so old a Date as the Book of *Job*. It seems to me to belong to the Times when War was become more an *Art*, than it was in the Times of *Job*: Conquerors then did not use to *keep the Field*; and why shou'd they, when one Battle commonly decided the Point, and the Conquered had nothing to do but to fly, and the Conqueror to pursue? And *even now, keeping the Field* is the *lowest* Idea of Victory, and signifies little more than not being routed: And was this a fit Image to represent the *all victorious* Power of the *Almighty*? Does it not convey to the Mind the Notion of a great *Struggle* for Victory, of great *Difficulties* in obtaining the Conquest? And is such a Notion agreeable to the Book of *Job*, which seems to be written on purpose to shew that God has no *Rival* in Power?

But there is a Circumstance belonging to *this Passage*, and which ought to be considered with it, to which *Grotius* has said nothing, and which can hardly be reconciled with the Opinion, that *Job* expected *no more* than a *temporal* Deliverance. The Case is this: *Job* being tired
with

with the Opposition of his Friends, and the perverse Construction they made of his Misfortunes, as if he must needs be as wicked as he was miserable, appeals from them to another Judgment. *Oh, says he, that my Words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a Book! That they were graven with an Iron Pen and Lead, in the Rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth.* You see how strongly Job insists upon his Plea; though Men would not receive it, yet he wishes it were graven in the Rock for ever; that it might remain till the Time, in which God would come to judge his Cause, *For I know, says he, that my Redeemer liveth.* Suppose Job to expect a future Time of Judgment, the whole Passage is exceeding beautiful and proper. “ I find, says
“ he, that my Complaint is disregarded
“ here, that *Man* has no *Compassion* for me,
“ and that *God* in his unsearchable Wis-
“ dom suffers the *Innocent*, as well as
“ the *Guilty*, to be *unfortunate* in this
“ Life: But the Time will come when
“ my

“ my Plea shall be heard, and so satisfy’d
 “ am I in the Righteousness of it, that I
 “ would have it remain as my Monu-
 “ ment for ever, *graven in the Rock*;
 “ for though I my self shall soon be gone
 “ yet my Redeemer lives, and will at
 “ the last Day call me from the Grave,
 “ and with *my own Eyes* shall I see God
 “ my Saviour: ” But if you suppose
Job to expect only a *temporal* Restitu-
 tion, within the Compass of his own Life,
 to what End or Purpose does he so pas-
 sionately wish to have his Complaints
 rendered Immortal? What Sense is there
 in saying; “ *Oh* that my Complaint which
 “ you despise may *never be forgotten*,
 “ for I know that within a *little Time*
 “ I shall be restored by God to all my
 “ Glory and former Felicity, and shall
 “ have no Cause to complain any more”.
 In one View, the Images are lively, pas-
 sionate, and the Sentiments just and pro-
 per; in the other, there is neither Force,
 nor Vigour, nor Propriety; nor indeed,
 hardly any Sense.

As to the Degree of Light and Know-
 ledge contained in *this Passage*, and which
 seems

seems disproportionate to the Age of *Job*, there is this to be said: There might possibly be among the few Faithful in the World, a traditionary Exposition of the Promises of God, grounded upon more express Revelations, made either before or soon after the Flood, than have come down to our Times; or, as *Job* was tryed in a very extraordinary Manner, he might have as extraordinary a Degree of Light to support and maintain him in the Conflict. There is nothing in either of these Suppositions, but what is conformable to the Methods of divine Providence; nothing that intrenches upon our blessed Lord's Office, who was appointed *to bring Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel*. 'Tis by *Christ*, and by him *alone*, that we have God's *Covenant of Immortality* conveyed to us, but yet the antient Prophets had a Sight of the Blessing at a Distance, as is evident from many of their Predictions †. And why might not *Job* be so honoured, as well as others who lived before the Days of our *Saviour*?

† See Dr. *C*ark's Discourse concerning the Connexion of the Prophets, &c. Page 12, 13.

But

But still there is something that seems very unaccountable in this Matter; for if *Job's* Friends allowed and believed this great Truth of a future Resurrection, how is it, that they continue to press their Argument, and to insist that he was undoubtedly *wicked*, because *miserable*? How is it, that they do not reply to this Argument, and shew the reasoning to be false, if they apprehended it to be so? Or, if this Knowledge was *peculiar* to *Job*, how is it, that they are not surprized at such *new*, such *strange* Doctrine? And yet no such Marks have been observed (as far as I have seen) by any Interpreters. The Book of *Job* is in the Nature of a *Drama*, in which several Persons appear discoursing one with another; and how could such a material Assertion *as this* pass unobserved by all the Speakers? One would imagine, from such Conduct, that *Job's* Friends understood him to speak only of his Hope in this Life, which they might entertain as a vain Delusion, and deserving of no Regard.

But I am persuaded the Case will appear otherwise upon a strict Examination;
and

and that the Circumstances relating to *this Passage*, duly observed, will cast a great Light upon it, and be a Means to open to us the true and genuine Meaning of it.

The Argument between *Job* and his Friends turns upon this Point, whether the Afflictions of this World are certain Marks of God's Displeasure, and an Indication of the Wickedness of those who suffer. *Job's* Friends maintain the Affirmative; and in Consequence of it, charge *Job* with great Iniquity, for no other Reason, but because they saw him greatly miserable. This they thought was doing Honour to the Justice of God; but *Job* calls it *speaking wickedly for God, and talking deceitfully for him; and accepting the Person of God*, Chap xiii. as corrupt Judges accept the Persons of great Men, when they give Sentence partially in their Favour. As to himself, he resolutely maintained his Innocence, but still he depended upon the Justice and Goodness of God, notwithstanding his present Distress. His Character cannot be better described than in his own Words, *Though he slay me, yet will*

will I trust in him: But I will maintain mine own Ways before him, Chap. xiii.

Ÿ. 15. 'Tis plain from hence, that *Job's* Friends confined the Exercise of God's Justice within the Scene of this World, and looked no further; but *He*, vexed with continued Reproaches, applies himself to God in certain Expectation of another time for Justice, *Oh that thou wouldest hide me in the Grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret until thy Wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set Time and remember me!* Chap. xiv.

Ÿ. 13. What Time was it, do you imagine, that *Job* desired to be appointed for him? Was it the Time of this Life? If so, how could it succeed his *being hid in the Grave*? No; he had other Hopes, and expected to be called from the Grave, and seems assured that God would not desert his Creatures even there; *Thou shalt call and I will answer thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the Work of thine Hands,*

Ÿ. 15. He had before declared his Notion, *That Man lieth down and riseth not till the Heavens be no more,* Ÿ. 12.

And presently he declares, that all Things were

were drawing to an end, the Earth and the Inhabitants thereof; *Surely the Mountain falling cometh to nought, and the Rock is removed out of his Place. The Waters wear the Stones: Thou wasthest away the things which grow out of the Dust of the Earth, and thou destroyest the Hope of Man. Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: &c.* 18, 19, 20. Thus far Job. Let us see now how this new Argument is entertained by his Friends: The first who replies is *Eliphaz the Temanite*; he appears quite astonished, and asks Job where he had *this Knowledge*, whether he had the *Secret of God*, and had engrossed all Wisdom to *himself*; he tells him, *they* were no Strangers to the Ways of God, but had heard as much from their Fathers as Job had, tho' he pretended to the Knowledge of *such secret Things*. But take his own Words; *Art thou the first Man that was born? Or wast thou made before the Hills? Hast thou heard the Secret of God? And dost thou restrain Wisdom to thy self? What knowest thou that we know not? What understandest thou, which is not*

in us? With us are both the grey headed, and very aged Men, much elder than thy Father. Are the Consolations of God (which we have instructed thee in) small with thee? Is there any secret Thing with thee? Chap. xv. v. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. After this strong Expostulation, he returns to his old Argument, and offers many Proofs, from antient Tradition, of God's immediate Vengeance upon the Wicked. The next who answers *Job* is *Bildad the Shubite*: He talks in the same Strain, and reproaches *Job* with his Pretence to secret Knowledge above others — *Wherefore*, says he, *are we counted as Beasts, and reputed vile in your Sight?* Chap. xviii. v. 3. And because *Job* had talked, as if the *Heavens* shou'd *cease to be*, and that the *Earth*, and its *Inhabitants* shou'd *fail*, and the *Rock* be *removed out of his Place*, *Bildad* thinks him e'en distracted with Passion, and reproaches him with his wild Conceit; *He teareth himself in his Anger: Shall the Earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the Rock be removed out of*

of

*of his Place? * Chap. xviii. v. 4. As if he had said, "What is this wonderful
 " Man, that he expects to see all Things
 " destroyed, the Earth and the Heavens
 " to pass away, that there may be a pro-
 " per Time to do him Justice? Is it not
 " more reasonable to think that God
 " will do Justice here, than that all the
 " Works of Nature shou'd be destroyed
 " to make Way for Judgment? Yea,
 " the Light of the Wicked shall be put
 " out, and the Spark of his Fire shall
 " not shine, v. 5.*

These repeated Provocations drew from *Job* that noble Declaration of his Faith and Hope, which is the Subject of our present Enquiry. In the next Chapter, he gently rebukes his Friends for their severe Reproaches for his supposed Error, *and he it indeed that I have er-
 r'd, mine Error remaineth with my self,* Chap. xix. v. 4. It affects not you, Why then are ye so enraged? He goes on, to

* Τί γάρ, εἰν οὐ ἀποβάλετ, ἀδελφοί, ἢ ὅτι δέχεται; What, if you die, must the Earth under the Heavens be uninhabitable? LXX.

I acknowledge

acknowledge in the first Place, that all his Misery was from the Hand of God; and that he cried in vain, being not regarded by God, or by Man; *I cry aloud, but there is no Judgment, &c.* 7. But then, so far was he from being ashamed of the *Error* imputed to him, that he appeals again with great Solemnity to the future Judgment of God — *Ob that my Words were now written: Ob that they were printed in a Book! That they were graven with an Iron Pen, and Lead in the Rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth: And tho' after my Skin Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for my self, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another.* Job's Meaning in this solemn Appeal may be understood from another like Passage; *Also now, behold, my Witness is in Heaven, and my Record is on high. My Friends scorn me: But mine Eye poureth out Tears unto God,* Chap. xvi. *&c.* 19, 20. From these Reasons and Circumstances laid together, it appears

pears to me evident, that *Job's* Friends understood him to speak of a Resurrection to Judgment, and not of a temporal Deliverance; otherwise, What Occasion was thereto reproach him with pretending to be *wiser* than *all Men*; to know the *Secret* of *God*, beyond what the *first Man* knew, or any who succeeded him? What Reason was there to charge him with an Opinion, that *the Earth* should be *forsaken* for his sake? His temporal Deliverance surely cou'd hurt neither the Earth nor its Inhabitants. Add to this, two other Charges brought against *Job's* Opinion by *Eliphaz*, and not yet taken Notice of; he calls his Notion *unprofitable*, *Speeches that can do no good*, nay which are hurtful; *for*, says he; *thou castest off Fear, and restrainest Prayer before God*, Chap. xv. v. 4. His Thought was plainly this; if once *Job* can persuade Men that God does not interpose to execute Judgment in this Life, but reserves all Things to a distant, *far distant Day* of Visitation, when the Heavens shall be no more, there will be an End of all *Fear* of *God*, an End of *all Prayer* and Suppli-

cation to him. * Taking it in this Light, we see how the Charge arises; but cou'd he possibly charge *Job's* Hope of *temporal* Deliverance with such Consequences? If not, tis a great Evidence in what manner he understood *Job*; and, I think, we need no other Interpreter.

This very Passage is to me no inconsiderable Argument of the Reality of the History contained in the Book of *Job*, and of the Antiquity of the Book itself: For supposing the Book to be a mere *poetical Fiction*, upon what Ground of Probability does the Author furnish *Job* with such exalted Sentiments of Religion, and, at the same Time suppose them to be such *Secrets* to all his Friends? Is there any such Instance in any Author? *Cicero*, in his Dialogues, introduces *Philosophers*, of different Opinions, but we find them all *acquainted* equally with the *common Notions* of their *own* Times; and it wou'd be absurd in any Author, to suppose the Contrary, without very evident Reason; and there can be no such Reason but the

* This Sense of the Passage is confirmed by a like Reflexion in the Book of *Job*, Chap. xxi. from *ŷ* 7. to *ŷ* 15.

Evidence of History. Consequently the Book of *Job* must be founded in *History*, and not in *Invention*. In the Time of *Job*, true Religion was preserved among a few, and communicated by special Revelation; whether therefore *Job* had himself this Knowledge by Prophecy, or received it by Tradition in his own House, from those who had, he might very well know what his Friends and Neighbours knew not. This Circumstance is natural, and agreeable to the Times, supposing the History to be true; but 'tis unnatural, and without Probability, which is the very *Life* of *poetical Fiction*, supposing the Book to be a mere Fable or Parable.

I have been much longer, in examining these Passages in the Book of *Job*, than I intended; but this Book is so obscure and hard to be understood, that I found it would be to little Purpose to produce the Passages, without endeavouring to fix the Meaning of them. And if I have not mistaken in so doing, the Time has been not ill employ'd; for the Evidence arising from this Book is in all respects

considerable, and 'tis of great Moment to see those great Strokes of true Religion, and of God's Purpose from the Beginning with respect to the Children of Men, preserved in an Author who cannot be charged with *Jewish* Education or Prejudices; but who was born in another Country, of another Family, and does not appear to have heard of *Moses*, or his Law, and yet *the Secret of God* was with him.

I will be very short in what follows.

We may consider the Books of *Psalms*, the *Proverbs*, and *Ecclesiastes*, as the Productions of one and the same Age; and there is no Reason to think but that the Writers had the same Opinions in the subject Matters of our Enquiry. If we find less, than it may seem reasonable to expect from these Writers, upon the Subject of the Fall, and the Promise made to *Adam*, there is a plain Reason to be given why it is so; for the great Promises made to *David* of a Son, *whose Kingdom should endure for ever*, had eclipsed all the antient Hopes, and so entirely possessed the Mind of the *Psalmist*, and of his Son *Solomon*,

Solomon, that they seldom look higher than the immediate Promises of God to themselves. But yet God's Method of opening gradually his Purposes to different Ages was understood by *Solomon*, who tells us, *That the Path of the just is as the shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect Day*, Prov. iv. 18. The Case was much the same with the succeeding Prophets; they were Ministers of new Declarations made by God, and had no Occasion to treat of the old. And of the later Writers, none treat expressly of this Subject; if ever they mention it, 'tis only occasionally and *in transitu*. All the Help therefore to be had in this Case, must come from Hints and Allusions and Ways of speaking, which refer to antient Things, and shew the Writer's Sense concerning them. Thus when *Solomon* tells us, *He applyed his Heart to know — the Reason of things, and to know the Wickedness of Folly, even of Foolishness and Madness*; and then declares the Result of all his Enquiry, *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made Man upright, but they have sought*

out many Inventions, Eccles. vii. 25, 29. When he tells us that *there is not a just Man upon the Earth, that doth good, and sinneth not*, x. 20. Not one who can say *I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my Sin*, Prov. xx. 9. When David tells us that he was *shapen in iniquity, that in Sin did his Mother conceive him*, Psalm li. 5. and that in the Sight of God *no Man shall be justified*, Psalm cxliii. 2. When we read in the Book of Wisdom, That God *made not Death, neither hath he Pleasure in the Destruction of the living. For he created all things, that they might have their Being; and the Generations of the World were healthful: And there is no Poison of Destruction in them; nor the Kingdom of Death upon the Earth. For Righteousness is immortal. But ungodly Men with their Works and Words called it to them*, Wisdom i. 13, 14, 15, 16. And again, That God *created Man to be immortal, and made him to be an Image of his own Eternity. Nevertheless through Envy of the Devil came Death into the World: And they that do hold of his*
Side

Side do find it, Wisd. ii. 23, 24. When the Son of *Sirach* tells us, *That Error and Darknefs had their Beginning together with Sinners*, Ecclus. xi. 16. That *Death is the Sentence of the Lord over all Flesh*, Ecclus. xli. 3. That *the Covenant from the Beginning was, thou shalt die the Death*, Ecclus. xiv. 17. That, *of Woman came the Beginning of Sin, and through her we all die*, Ecclus. xxv. 24. That God, at the first, *filled Man with the Knowledge of Understanding, and shewed him Good and Evil*. Ecclus. xvii. 7. And *left him in the Hand of his (own) Counsel*, Ecclus. xv. 14. When, I say, we read and compare all these Passages together, can there be any reasonable Foundation to doubt in what Sense the antient *Jewish* Church understood the History of the Fall, or what Consequences they ascribed to it?

When we find the *Wicked*, and the *Enemies of God* represented under the Image of a *Serpent*, Isa. xiv. 29. xxvii. 1. Micah vii. 17. Of *Leviathan the crooked serpent*; of a *Dragon*, Isa. xxvii. 1. When we hear the Wretchedness of the
Idola-

Idolater described by the Prophet in the following Terms, *He feedeth of Ashes: A deceived Heart hath turned him aside that he cannot deliver his Soul*, Isa. xliv. 20. And when we hear *David* singing the Triumphs of *his Son*, to whom the everlasting Kingdom was promised, in such Strains as these, *His Name shall endure for ever: His Name shall be continued as long as the Sun: And Men shall be blessed in him; all Nations shall call him blessed*, Psalm lxxii. 17. *His Enemies shall lick the Dust*, &c. 9. *He shall tread upon the Lion and Adder: The young Lion and the Dragon shall be trample under Feet*, Ps. xci. 13. *He shall bruise his Enemies with a Rod of Iron*, Ps. ii. 9. When we hear likewise the Prophet describing the Kingdom, which he foretold, in like Figures, and representing the State of the Wicked under that Kingdom, in these very Words, *and Dust shall be the Serpents Meat*, Isa. lxv. 25. Can we give any tolerable Account of these Things, but by supposing *David* to understand, that the *Son* promised to him, in whose Time *Righteousness* and *Truth* were

were to be established, was the very *Seed of the Woman*, who should bruise the *Serpent's Head*? Could the Prophets understand their Predictions to belong to any other, when the Triumph of his Reign was to be a Victory over the *Serpent*, whose Food should then be Dust? Of the same Person *David* and the Prophets foretel, that he should rule over all Nations, that *Men should be blessed in him*, that *all Nations should call him blessed*; which is the distinguishing Character of the *blest Seed* promised to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*. From all which 'tis evident, that the *Seed of the Woman*, who shou'd bruise the *Serpent's Head*; the *Seed* promised to *Abraham*, in whom all the Nations of the Earth shou'd be blessed; the *Son* promised to *David*, to sit on his Throne for ever; and the *King*, who should rule out of *Sion*, foretold by the Prophets, is ONE and the SAME Person: That the Purpose of God, in giving the *Word of Prophecy*, was the same in every Age; That *Christ* has, under different Degrees of Light, been set forth from the Beginning, as the
Hope

Hope of the World ; That He it was, whose *Day* the faithful in every Age *desired to see*. He it was, *who preserved the first formed Father of the World, that was created alone, and brought him out of his Fall*. Wisdom x i. He it is, who shall reign till *all Enemies are put under his Feet, till Death and Hell are cast into the Lake of Fire*. Rev. xx. 14.





DISSERTATION III.

The Blessing of JUDAH, Gen. xlix.



WHEN *Jacob* drew near his End, he called his Sons together, and blessed them, *every one according to his Blessing, benediction-* Gen. xlix. 28.

nibus suis propriis; i. e. giving to each a peculiar Blessing. Vulg. The Part relating to *Judah* stands thus:

Ÿ. 8. *Judah, thou art he whom thy Brethren shall praise; thy Hand shall be in the Neck of thine Enemies: Thy Father's Children shall bow down before thee.*

Y. 9. *Judah is a Lion's Whelp; from the Prey, my Son, thou art gone up: He stooped down, he couched as a Lion, and as an old Lion; Who shall rouse him up?*

10. *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the People be.*

11. *Binding his Fole unto the Vine, and his Asses Colt unto the choice Vine; he washed his Garments in Wine, and his Cloaths in the Blood of Grapes.*

There is no Prophecy in the *Old Testament*, that has undergone so many Interpretations, and critical Disquisitions, as this now before us. It wou'd make a Volume to report exactly the various Sentiments of learned Men upon this Subject. They who desire to be acquainted with them may consult *Huetius* *, *Mr. Le Clerc* †, and *Mr. Saurin* ‡.

* *Demonstratio Evangelica, Cap. 4. Prop. 9.*

† *Comment. in locum.*

‡ *Discours. Historiques, &c. Disc. 41.*

It may be thought perhaps great Presumption to attempt any thing upon this Passage, after so much Pains bestowed on it by Men of great Figure in Learning; but as I have no Intention to make Shew of much Learning, or much Reading, but only to offer a plain, natural Sense, of the most important Passage in this Prophecy, which seems to me to arise from the very State and Circumstances of Things, at the time this Prophecy was delivered; I hope it will not be thought the Effect of Vanity, or Ostentation.

There is a Passage in the Book *Ecclesiasticus*, which will serve as a Key to open to us the Nature of the Blessings bestowed on the twelve Tribes by their Father *Jacob*. This Author, the Son of *Sirach*, observes, That God gave his Covenant to *Abraham*, *establisht it with Isaac, and made it rest upon the Head of Jacob*. Thus far the *entire Blessing*, and all the Parts of it, vested in *single Persons* only: But in the next Step there is an Alteration; for God *divided Jacob's Portions*, Ecclus: xliv. 19. &c. among the twelve Tribes did he part them. There is no question, but that this

this Passage relates to the *Settlement*, and the *Blessing*, of the Tribes by *Jacob*, in the xlviiith and xlixth of *Genesis*; and it shews us, that the several Blessings given to the several Tribes are but *Parts*, or *Portions* of the Blessing, which *Jacob* received from *Isaac*; *Isaac* from *Abraham*; and *Abraham* immediately from *God*. In this View then the several Blessings, mentioned in the xlixth of *Genesis*, and limited to the several Tribes, must be considered as an Exposition of the original Blessing given to *Abraham*; and the Blessing, from which the others are derived, must limit and determine the Sense of the Particulars; which cannot be extended beyond the Bounds of the first Promise.

Setting aside the Authority of the Son of *Sirach*, 'tis reasonable to think that this was the Case, from the Custom and Practice in *Abraham's* Family, in which the Blessing of the Father was regularly conveyed to the Son. And when we see *Jacob* Blessing all his Children, what can we suppose else, but that he is transmitting to his Posterity the Blessing which he himself

self received. If we look to the Beginning of the *xlviii^h* of *Genesis*, where *Jacob* adopts *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, the two Sons of *Joseph*, and constitutes them *Heads of Tribes* in his Family, and consequently entitles them to a Share, among his own Sons, of the Land of *Canaan*; there will be no room to doubt of this Matter. For *Jacob* founds his Right of allotting the Land of *Canaan*, in the Manner he does, upon God's Grant of that Land to himself. *Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the Land of Canaan, and blessed me, and said unto me, behold I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a Multitude of People, and will give this Land to thy Seed after thee, for an everlasting Possession. And now thy two Sons Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the Land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine: As Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine, &c. 3, 4, 5.*

Jacob prefaces his Grant to *Joseph's* Family, with a Recital only of God's Promise to make him *fruitful*, and to

give the Land of *Canaan* to him and his Seed; for his Gift to *Joseph's* Family went not beyond the Terms of this Grant.

But the Blessing of *Abraham*, derived to his *chosen* Seed, consisted of two Parts; the Promise of the Land of *Canaan*, and the Promise of that Son, in whom *all the Nations of the Earth were to be blessed*. These two Promises went inseparably together from the Beginning, and, we shall find they continued, in some Degree, to do so to the End.

Let us see now in what Terms these two Promises are conveyed.

The Land of <i>Canaan</i> to <i>Abraham</i> .	The blessed Seed to <i>Abraham</i> .
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<i>The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, Unto thy Seed will I give this Land, Gen. xii. 7.</i>	<i>Thou shalt be a Blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: And in thee shall all Families of the Earth be blessed, Gen. xii. 2, 3.</i>
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Lift up now thine Eyes, and look from the Place where thou art, Northward, and Southward, and Eastward, and Westward, for all the Land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy Seed for ever. and I will make thy Seed as the Dust of the Earth. Gen. xiii. 14, &c.

Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty Nation, and all the Nations of the Earth shall be blessed in him. Gen. xviii. 18.

To Isaac.

To Isaac.

Unto thee, and unto thy Seed I will give all these Countries, — and I will make thy Seed to multiply as the Stars of Heaven. Gen. xxvi. 3, 4.

And in thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed. Gen. xxvi. 4.

To Jacob.

To Jacob.

*God give thee of
the Dew of Hea-
ven, and the Fat-
ness of the Earth,
and Plenty of Corn
and Wine. Gen.
xxvii. 28.*

*The Elder shall
serve the Younger.
Gen. xxv. 23. Let
the People serve
thee, and Nations
bow down to thee;
be Lord over thy
Brethren, and let
thy Mother's Son
bow down to thee:
Cursed be every one
that curseth thee,
and blessed be he that
blesseth thee. Gen.
xxvii. 29.*

*With Corn and
Wine have I sus-
tained him. Gen.
xxvii. 37.*

*Behold I have
made him thy Lord,
and all his Brethren
have I given to him
for Servants. Gen.
xxvii. 37.*

*The Land where-
on thou liest, to thee
will I give it, and*

*In thee and in
thy Seed shall all
the Nations of the
to*

*to thy Seed. And Earth be blessed.
thy Seed shall be as Gen. xxviii. 14.
the Dust of the
Earth; and thou
shalt spread abroad
to the West, and to
the East, and to the
North, and to the
South. Gen. xxviii.
13, 14.*

To the Tribe of
Judah.

To the Tribe of
Judah.

*Judah is a Lion's
Whelp; from the
Prey, my Son, thou
art gone up: He
stooped down, he
couched as a Lion,
and as an old Lion;
who shall rouse him
up. The Sceptre
shall not depart
from Judah, nor a
Lawgiver from be-*

*Judah thou art be
whom thy Brethren
shall praise; thy
Hand shall be in the
Neck of thine Ene-
mies: Thy Father's
Children shall bow
down before thee.
Gen. xlix. 8.*

*Until Shilo come,
and unto him shall
the gathering of the
tween*

*tween his Feet, un- People be. Gen. xlix.
 til Shilo come, and 11.
 unto him shall be
 Gathering of the
 People be. Binding
 his Fole unto the
 Vine, &c. Gen. xlix.
 9, 10, 11.*

If the Words, which I have here placed as the Conveyance of the Promise of the *blessed Seed* to the Tribe of *Judah*, be not admitted in that Sense, there are no others, relating to this, or any of the other Tribes, which make any Mention, much less any Settlement of this Part of *Jacob's* Blessing. And yet there never was any Doubt, either in the antient *Jewish* Church before *Christ*, or among the *Jews* since the Time of *Christ*, but that the Promise of the *Messiah* was limited to the Tribe of *Judah* in this Blessing: nor is it reasonable to imagine that *Jacob* in dividing his Blessing among his Posterity, shou'd forget the chief and principal Part, which had been with so much Solemnity conveyed
 from

from *Abraham*, through *Isaac*, to himself. Besides, the Expression here used, *Thou art he whom thy Brethren shall praise*, is equivalent to what was said to *Abraham*, *Thou shalt be a Blessing*; and to what was said to *Jacob*, *Blessed be he that bleisseth thee*, and must consequently mean the same thing. But of this Part I have already treated in the foregoing Discourses, and will not burden the Reader and my self, with Repetitions.

The Promise of the blessed Seed could not be divided, for a Man can descend but from *one* Tribe; a *Son* can be born but of *one* Father; and therefore this Part of *Jacob's* Blessing went entire to the Tribe of *Judah*. All the other Tribes have their special Blessing assigned them out of the promised Land; and Interpreters need not be concerned, as some of them are, to find wherein the *peculiar Blessing* of some of the Sons of *Jacob*, to whom, or of whom, very little is said, does consist; for the making them *Heads of Tribes* conveyed to them a Right to a Share in the Land of *Canaan*, and in

that their Blessing consisted, and by that they receiv'd a Portion of the Blessing of of their Father.

The Promise to *Abraham*, of *multiplying his Seed*, and giving them the *Land of Canaan* for a *Possession*, implied necessarily a Promise of temporal Power and Dominion. For a People cannot possess a Land without some Form, or Rule of Government among them. All the Promises therefore of a numerous Issue, of Strength and Courage in subduing Enemies, and the like, are incident to the Promise of the Land of *Canaan*, and must be referred to it. Thus when we hear the Character of *Judah*; *Judah is a Lion's Whelp; from the prey my Son, thou art gone up: He stooped down and couch'd as a Lion, and as an old Lion; who shall rouse him?* To what else can we apply these Images, of Courage and Bravery, but to the martial Disposition of the Tribe of *Judah*, and to their Victories obtained over the antient Possessors of the Land of *Canaan*? In like Manner all the Promises of Plenty are part of the Promise, which God gave to *Abraham* and his Posterity,
of

of a *Land flowing with Milk and Honey*. Of *Judah*'tis said—*Binding his Foe unto the Vine, and his Asses Colt unto the choice Vine; He washed his Garments in Wine, and his Clothes in the Blood of Grapes. His Eyes shall be red with Wine, and his Teeth white with Milk*. This is a *Portion of Jacob's Blessing*; and can it naturally be deduced from any Part of the Blessing bestowed on him by his Father, but this only? *God give thee of the Dew of Heaven, and the Fatness of the Earth, and Plenty of Corn and Wine*.

Gen.
xxvii. 28.

There remains still to be accounted for, the Passage relating to the Sceptre of *Judah*: The Words are these;

The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the People be.

The Promise to *Abraham* was, that he should be the *Father of many Nations*; and of *Sarah* it is said, *She shall be a Mo-* Gen. xvii.
ther^{5.}

ther of Nations, Kings of People shall be of her. To *Jacob* it is said, *God multiply thee, that thou mayst be a Multitude of People.* The Succession in the House of *Abraham* was preserved in single Persons till *Jacob's* Time; he is the first who had a numerous Issue, and all of them entitled to the Promises made to their Forefathers. The Sons of *Jacob* lived with him, as Children of his Family only, till his going into *Egypt*; for when the Account is given of their Removal to *Egypt*, they are reckoned not as Heads of Tribes, but as so many Persons only, belonging to the Family of *Jacob*: *All the Souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his Loins, besides Jacob's Sons Wives, all the Souls were threescore and six,* to which *Jacob*, and *Joseph*, and his two Sons, born in *Egypt*, being added, 'tis said, *All the Souls of the House of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.* Hitherto there is no mention of any *Tribe*, or of any *House*, but the House of *Jacob*. This State of Things continued during the seventeen Years of *Jacob's* Life in *Egypt*,
in

Gen. i. 16

Gen. xxv. 3.

Gen. xlv. 26.

1b1b. v. 27.

in all which Time there is no appearance of any Power or Authority, in any *Rulers*, or *Elders*, or *Heads* of Tribes, but in *Jacob* only. And how shou'd there, before any *Tribes* were appointed, or any Form of Government was settled? When *Jacob* drew near his End, he summoned all his Family, in order to appoint the Form of Government which shou'd take place after his Death, and continue as long as his Posterity held Possession of the Land of *Canaan*. The xlixth Chapter of *Genesis* is commonly called, *Jacob's Blessing of his Sons*; but it might as well be called *Jacob's Appointment* of twelve *Rulers* or *Princes* to govern the House of *Israel*. For tell me, how came this Form of Government, by a Distribution of the People into twelve Tribes with Heads and Rulers over them, to be pitched upon rather than any other? There is no Designation of this Form of Government in any other Place of Scripture; and it cou'd not be settled tacitly, by a mere Devolution of *Jacob's* Power, among his Sons, after his Decease; for had that been the Case, *Ephraim* and
Manasseh

Manasseh cou'd not have been Heads of Tribes, for their Father *Joseph* was living, and he must have been Head of one Tribe, as the rest of his Brethren were. Nor is it to be imagined, that so considerable a Part of the Story, as the founding and settling the Government of *Israel*, shou'd be passed over by *Moses* in silence; and his Reader left to supply by Imagination so material a Part of the History. It must therefore be allowed, that the Government of *Israel* is settled by *Jacob* in the xlviiith and xlixth of *Genesis*.

All the Circumstances reported in these two Chapters answer to this Idea. In the first Place *Jacob* gives the Birthright, as to the temporal Inheritance, to *Joseph*, by giving him a double Portion, and raising out of his Family two Princes, or Heads of Tribes, in *Israel*: *Ephraim and Manasseh are mine: As Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.* And because other Issue from *Joseph* wou'd have stood upon a Level in point of Descent with *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, and it might have been doubtful whether they might not claim to be Rulers themselves, and equal

equal to their Brothers, *Jacob* directs that they should be reckoned in the Tribes of their two Brothers, *They shall be called after the Name of their Brethren in their Inheritance*. By this Designation of *Jacob*, the two Sons of *Joseph* were appointed, each to be the Head of a separate People; for this, *Jacob*, speaking of these two Grandchildren, declares; *He, Manasseh, shall become a People, and he also shall be great: But his Brother, Ephraim, shall be greater than he, and his Seed shall become a Multitude of Nations*. In the following Chapter, *Jacob* speaks to his Sons as the *Representatives* of so many *distinct People*; which is expressly remarked by *Moses*, *All these are the twelve Tribes of Israel*; and it is evident likewise from hence, that the Things foretold and ascribed to them, are by no means capable of being understood of single Persons. Here the Promise to *Abraham*, *That he should be Father of many Nations*; and to *Sarah*, *That Kings of People should be of her*, began to take Effect; for, from this time forward, the People of *Israel* are reckoned by their

Gen.
xlviii. 6.Gen.
xlviii. 19.Gen. xlix.
28.

their *Tribes*, which were so many *distinct People*, or (in the Language of the Book of *Genesis*) *Nations*, independent of each other, and subsisting under *Rulers* and *Judges* of their own; but confederated for mutual Defence, and the Maintenance of one Law to be given equally to all. It ought to be no Wonder to hear the Tribes of *Israel* called *Nations*, and their Heads *Princes*; for the same Language is used of *Ishmael's* twelve Sons: — *These are the Sons of Ishmael, and these are their Names, by their Towns and by their Castles; twelve Princes according to their Nations.* These Princes could be no more than Heads of Tribes; * and such Princes likewise were the *Dukes*, and the *Kings of Edom*. † *Ishmael* was the Son of *Abraham*, and *Esau* was Son of *Isaac*; and their Families could not be much more numerous than *Jacob's*, and yet they are reckoned, according to their Princes, and their Dukes, and by their several Nations. In truth all the Govern-

Gen. xxv.
16.

* Vide Clericum in locum.

† Gen. xxxvi. Vide Clericum ad versum decimum quintum.

ments of the *East* seem at this Time to have been of this Sort. What were the four Kings, think you, whom *Abraham* overthrew with three hundred and eighteen of his own Servants, and the Assistance of his three Friends, who might perhaps make as many more? What were the thirty two Kings, whose Country was divided among the twelve Tribes? The Princes of the Tribes of *Israel* were surely equal in Power and Dignity to such Kings; and such were the Kings of those Days. This Observation will teach us to restrain and limit our Ideas within due Bounds, when we read of *Kings*, and *Princes*, and *Sceptres*, and *Judges*, and *Nations*, in these early Times; and not to imagine, because the Words are the same which we now use, that they must necessarily signify as high Degrees of Power, as now they do.

What kind of Power *Jacob* settled upon these Heads of Tribes, may appear from what he himself says of *Dan*; *Dan shall judge his People, as one of the Tribes of Israel.* All the People of *Israel* ^{Gen. xlix. 16.} were not *Dan's* People, and therefore 'tis absurd

absurd to imagine any Power given to *Dan*, or any of his Descendents, over the whole House of *Jacob*. Besides nothing *peculiar* is given to *Dan* in this Grant; he was to judge *his* own *People* indeed; but how? Why *as one of the Tribes of Israel* * From whence 'tis evident, that every Tribe had its own Princes and Judges; and that every Prince, or Head of a Tribe, judged his own People; consequently every Tribe had a *Sceptre*, and a *Law-giver*, as well as the Tribe of *Judah*.

That this Power, in the Heads of Tribes, took place immediately upon the Death of *Jacob*, may be collected from hence, that from this Time, all Applications and Messages are, not to the People, but to the Elders of *Israel*. The Command of God sent to the *House of Jacob*, and the *Children of Israel*, in *Egypt*, was delivered by *Moses* to the *Elders of the People*. The People and their Rulers are distinguished plainly in *Exod. xxxiv*:

Exod. iii. 16.
xii. 21.
Exod. xix. 3, 7.

* Quia pence ejus solo em in communi politia pars gubernationis & imperii erit, ut tribus ista caput unum efficiat. *Varabius in locum.*

Aaron and all the Rulers of the Congregation returned unto him, and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the Children of Israel came nigh. Exod. xxxiv. 31, 22.

The Government, in the several Tribes of *Israel*, was not Monarchical, but Aristocratical, as appears by comparing the Passages, referred to in the Margin; and that no one Tribe had a Superiority over another, is plain upon the Death of *Joshua*; for then the People enquire of God, who should go up for them against the Canaanites. A Question, that would not have been asked, had any one Tribe, or Ruler of one Tribe, had the Right of leading and governing the rest. When the Children of *Benjamin* were guilty in the Matter of the *Levite's* Concubine, no one Tribe, or Ruler of one Tribe, pretends to call them to account for it; but all the Tribes of *Israel* jointly send to expostulate with them, and to demand Justice; and upon Refusal of Justice, recourse is had to Arms immediately. What Authority the Princes of Tribes had among their own People, may be collected from the Song of *Deborah*,
X where

Judges
v. 9, 10.

where they are described, *as Governours in Israel, riding on white Asses, and sitting in Judgment.* And 'tis with Allusion to this Form of Government that our Saviour promises his Disciples, that they *shall sit on twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel.*

Matth.
xix. 28.

Having now seen the Constitution of the Tribes of *Israel*, and the Powers and Authorities incident to a Tribe, as such, we may look back to the Prophecy, and try whether this Light will direct us in the Exposition of it. *Jacob* having settled *twelve Princes*, or Rulers of People, in his House, summons them together to hear what *should befall them in the last Days*; he speaks to them as Heads of People, and not as single Persons, and what he says relates to them, and their People collectively, and not to them personally. Since then he speaks to all *as Princes*, and tells *Judah*, in particular, that the *SCEPTRE* *should not depart from HIM until Shiloh came*, what can we understand by the *Sceptre*, in this Place, but that *very Power, and Right of Government*, now settled and establish'd
in

in the House of *Judah*, and in all the other Tribes; and which *Jacob* foresaw would depart from the other Tribes long before the coming of *Shiloh*, but would remain with *Judah* until *Shiloh* came? The Promise to *Judah*, that his *Sceptre should not depart*, amounts to a Declaration that the *sceptres* of the other Tribes should depart, and plainly shews that the *Sceptre* was not a thing peculiar to *Judah*; for the Promise here to *Judah* is not, that he should *have a Sceptre*, which none of his Brethren had, or were to have; but that *his Sceptre* should *continue* longer with him, than his Brothers *Sceptres* should *continue* with them.

Most of the Interpreters, whom I have consulted, take it for granted, and it is the common Notion, that the thing here promised to *Judah* is the *Sceptre*; and that the SCEPTRE was not to be settled in *Judah's* Family, till some Ages after the Death of *Jacob*: Which last Observation is grounded upon *Jacob's* Words — *That I may tell you that* Gen. xlix. *which shall befall you in the last Days.*¹

But the first of these Observations has no

Ground in the Text: nay, rather, is absolutely inconsistent with it. The antient Versions all agree in one Sense, the same which our *English* Version has expressed, *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah*. Do not these Words suppose the *Sceptre* to be already in the Hand of *Judah*? Is there any Sense in saying, that a thing shall not *depart*, which never yet was in Possession? The Prophecy is not a *Grant* of the *Sceptre*, but a *Confirmation* of it; now a Confirmation of *nothing*, is *nothing*, and to make it *something*, the Possession of the Thing confirmed must be supposed. I know not by what Rules of Language, or *Grammar*, these Words can be construed into a *Grant* of the *Sceptre*; and though so many Writers, and Interpreters, have followed this Sense, yet I do not remember to have seen one Passage, or Parallel Expression, from the Scripture, or any other Author, produced to justify the Interpretation. Yet surely, 'tis no usual Way of speaking, to say, *Your Sceptre shall not depart*, when the Speech is directed to one who has *no Sceptre*, nor is to have one for many Ages.

The second Observation, when rightly applied, is right; and if the *Continuance* of the Sceptre of *Judah* be, as I suppose, the Thing foretold, it extends to the *very last Days* of the *Jewish* State; and in this respect the Interpretation is justified.

Another Thing supposed by most Interpreters is, that the *Sceptre*, here mentioned, is an Emblem of Dominion over *all the Tribes of Jacob*. But how can that be? Had not *Jacob* settled a *Sceptre* in every Tribe, as is evident *Y. 16*. *Dan shall judge his People as one of the Sceptres* * of Israel? Suppose a Father had divided his Estate among twelve Sons, and shou'd say of one of them, *The Estate shall not depart from John for many Ages*; Cou'd you possibly suppose him to mean more than the *Share* of the *Estate* given to *John*? Cou'd you understand him to mean, that *all the Estate*, the twelve Shares, shou'd come to *John*, and continue in his Family? The Case is the same here, twelve Princes are created; of one of

* The original Word is *Schevet*, the same which is rendered *Sceptre* in the Prophecy relating to *Judah*.

them *Jacob* says, *The Sceptre shall not depart FROM HIM*——until *Shiloh* come. Is it not plain then that the *Sceptres* are distinguished here, and that 'tis foretold of one, that it shall long outlast the rest? The Words therefore, *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah*, are equivalent to these, *Judah's Sceptre shall not depart*; and this Sense is justified by the Original, the Seventy, the Vulgate, and the *Chaldee Paraphrast* †. It must be remembred, that *Judah* does not, in *Gen. xlix.* mean, what in after-times it came to mean, the whole People of the *Jew*; but it means distinctly the Tribe of *Judah* only; and the Words, now under Consideration, can possibly import no more than this; *The Sceptre shall not be taken from the Tribe of Judah* — Consequently the *Sceptre* here is an Emblem of *Authority in and over a Tribe only*; and can by no means, in these Circumstances, be made to signify or denote an *Authority over all the Tribes of Israel*.

† Non auferetur principatum habens à Domo Judæ,
C. P. *The Ruler shall not be taken away from the House of Judah.*

The same Word in the Original (*Schevet*) signifies a *Tribe*, and a *Sceptre*; and probably a *Tribe*, because a *Tribe* is a Collection of People under the Government of *one Sceptre*, or Authority *. Others, I know, account otherwise for this Signification †. But the Seventy Interpreters would never have used the Greek Word *σκήπτρον*, to denote a *Tribe*, had they not thought that the original Word was used to signify a *Tribe*, upon the Notion of its being a Body under one and the same Government. When the People were assembled for the Choice of a King, *Samuel* saysto them, present yourselves before the Lord, *by your Tribes*, *ἡ τὰ σκήπτρα ὑμῶν*, (Seventy) *and the Tribe of Benjamin was taken*, *ἡ καὶ ἀνελήθη* *σκήπτρον Βενιαμὲν*, (Seventy.) When God

1 Sam.
x. 19.

Ibid.
x. 20.

* Traductum vero nomen est ad significandum tribum—quod unaquæq; tribus suam peculiarem virgam haberet, nomine suo inscriptam, quam tribuum principes — Manu gestare consueverant — Cum Dominus Aaronem his verbis alloquitur; *sed & fratres tuos de tribu Levi, & sceptrum Patris tui sume tecum*; intellige sceptrum ipsum, & totam tribum quæ sceptro significabatur, & regebatur. *Menochius de rep. Heb. Lib. 1. cap. 4.*

† *Schevet*; Tribus, quod ex arbore seu stirpe nata sit, h. e. è patre. *Kircherus, Concord. in voce, Schevet.*

X †

threatens

1 Kings
x1. 13.

threatens *Solomon* to divide his Kingdom, he adds, *but I will give one Tribe to thy Son*, σκῆπτρον ἐν δώσω τῷ υἱῷ σὺ (Seventy). Many other Instances there are, but these are sufficient to shew the Relation between the Sceptre and the Tribe, and that it is conformable to the Language and Usage of Scripture, to understand by the Word *Sceptre*, the *Authority* in, and over a *single Tribe*.

What the true Import of the Word *Lawgiver* is, in this Place, cannot be determined but by reference to the Government or Constitution intended. When we know the Form of Government, we can easily determine what *Lawgiver* signifies; but we cannot from the Word *Lawgiver* determine the Form of Government intended. The Reason is, because there are as many Kinds of *Lawgivers*, as there are Forms of Government in the World. The Sense of the Word *Lawgiver*, in this Place, must necessarily therefore be governed by the Sense of the Word *Sceptre*. If *Sceptre* signifies here the Authority and Power over a Tribe only, the Word *Lawgiver*, joined with it,

it, must necessarily be confined to mean such *Lawgivers* only, as single Tribes had within themselves. Consequently, what has been said to fix the Meaning of the Word *Sceptre*, serves equally to fix the Sense of *Lawgiver*. The Seventy Interpreters have rendered the Word *Schevet* by Ἀρχων, and *Mechokek* by ἡγούμενος; * Mr. *Ioncourt* suspects that they were led by a kind of national Pride and Vanity to make Choice of these Terms, that carry in them such grand Ideas of *Royal* and *Princely* Power. But before the passing of this Censure, he ought to have examined whether the Seventy do constantly, or usually, employ these Terms to signify so much Power as he supposes. Ἀρχων and Ἀρχοντες, are used by the Seventy above an hundred Times, at least, to signify the *Head*, or *Heads*, of the Tribes of *Israel*. There are twelve In-

* Prevenus de toute la pompe de la superiorité & des grandeurs dont je viens de parler, ils ont cru que *Schevet*, qui signifie communément *Verge*, doit être en cet endroit une *verge de Commandement*; c'est pourquoi entraînez de ce beau côté, ils ont traduit hardiment *le Prince ne sera point ôté à Juda*. Letters Critiques, p. 163.

stances of this Use of the Word in one Numb. ii. Chapter of the Book of *Numbers*, and Numb. iv. about sixteen in another. The Instances indeed are so many, that it is quite needless to produce any, the *Concordance* will furnish Authorities to every Enquirer. The Case is the same as to the Word ἡγάρμω. In 2 *Chron.* v. 1. we meet with both these Words together in the same Sense. Solomon *assembled all the Elders of Israel*, καὶ πάντας τὰς ἀρχοντας τῶν φυλῶν, τὰς ἡγερμώους πατριῶν τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ. So again, 1 *Chr.* vii. 4. *All these were the Children of Asher*, ἡ ἀρχοντες οἰκῶν πατριῶν—ἡγάρμοι τῶν ἀρχόντων τῶν γενεαλογηθέντων ἐν τῇ σάσει τῆς πολέμου. Thus the Sons of *Esau* who were no other than Heads of Tribes, are called ἡγεμόνες, Gen. xxxvi. and the Sons of *Ishmael*, who were Princes of the same Sort, are styled, Gen. xxv. ἡ ἀρχοντες. What Reason is there now to suspect the Seventy of Vanity, Prejudice, or Artifice; or to suppose that they mean any higher Degree of Power by the Words in this Place, than they do in many other Places, where they make use of them?

A Law

A Lawgiver from between his Feet: There is no Interpretation of these Words, but what suits with the Exposition of the Prophecy now proposed; and therefore I may refer my self in this, to the Reader's Choice among the several Interpretations given of this Phrase. The Words may be construed two Ways, for we may either read thus, *A Lawgiver from between his Feet, shall not depart from Judah*; or thus, *A Lawgiver shall not depart from between the Feet of Judah*. In the first Way of Reading, the Meaning probably is, *That the Lawgivers of Judah should be of his own Descendents*; and so they were: In the second Reading, the Meaning is, *That the Tribe of Judah should have Lawgivers of their own, to the very last Times*. This is *Wagenfeil's* * Sense of the Words; and it is the Sense of *Onkelos*.

But suppose the original Word to be rightly rendered, in this place, *Lawgiver*, it will afford a strong Objection against any Interpretation, which extends the

* Carminis Lipmanni confutatio, p. 293.

Powers here mentioned over all the People of *Israel*. For the Tribe of *Judah* never had a *Legislative* Authority over all the Tribes; no, not even in the Days of *David* and *Solomon*. When the People desired a King, they expressed their Meaning very clearly, to have a *Judge*, and *one to go out before them to fight their Battles*. And when *Samuel* rehearses to them the *Manner* of their King, there is no Appearance that he was to be a *Lawgiver*. And *Moses*, who was the only *Lawgiver* of the People of *Israel*, had excluded all Kings from this Power, *They were to have a Copy of the Law*, and not *to turn aside from the Commandment, to the right Hand or to the left*. And the Ordinances made by *David*, relating to the Service of the Temple, were established by Authority and Consent of the Princes and Rulers of Tribes. So little Appearance is there, that *Judah* was ever *Lawgiver* to all the Tribes of *Jacob*. Nor indeed cou'd this Power, in a proper Sense, belong to single Tribes; for tho' they might, and did make such Rules, as we commonly call *By-laws*; yet the Law
of

1 Sam.
viii. 19.

Deut.
xvii. 18,
26.

Ezra. viii.
20.

of *Moses* was their unalterable Law, both for Civil and Ecclesiastical Affairs. And therefore I rather chuse to understand *Judge*, (for so the Word in the Original may be understood) than *Lawgiver*, in this Place; and this agrees best to the Passage referred to before, *Dan shall JUDGE his People, as one of the Tribes of Israel.*

As to the Word *Shiloh*, I have nothing to add to the Expositions of the Learned. They who are desirous to see the several Ways of accounting for the Signification of this Word, may consult the Authors referred to by *Wagenseil**. *Le Clerc* †, and *Saurin* ‡ If by this Word we understand *Pacificus*, the *Peace-maker*, or Restorer of Peace, who can it design, but him in whose Time there was to be *abundance of Peace*, and *Righteousness for evermore*? If we understand by it, *Mittendus*, the *Person to be sent*, who can that be, but the same, of whom so many Promises and Prophecies had been given;

* Carm. Lip. conf. p. 294.

† In locum.

‡ *Discourse* 41. p. 519, &c.

even the *blessed Seed*? If we chuse rather to interpret it *Filius ejus*, his Son; who is this *peculiar Son* of *Judah*, but the blessed Seed; the Promise of which was settled on *Judah*? If we take the Version of the Seventy for our Guide, and render the Word with them, τὸ ἀποκρίψα αὐτῷ, or ὃ ἀπέρχεται; The same Person still is pointed out; the *blessed Seed*, was the great Treasure in reserve for *Judah*; the blessed Seed was he for whom all Things were reserved, whose the Kingdom was to be. If, lastly, we follow Mr. *Le Clerc*, and render the Word *Finis*, (the End,) what End can be intended, but the End of the Settlement and Establishment made by *Jacob* at this Time; or, in other Words, the End of God's present Covenant, in virtue of which the Division of the Land of *Canaan* was made among the twelve Tribes by *Jacob*, and which was to be succeeded by the *Covenant of better Hopes*? In all Views the Prophecy must terminate in *Christ*; and a *Continuance* of the Power now settled in the House of *Judah* is promised till the *Messiah* comes. This agrees with the Sense of all antient Expositors,

positors, both *Jews* and *Christians*, as may be seen in the Authors already mentioned.

All these Expositions depend upon the *Interpretation* of the *Word Shiloh*. And if we consider the *Context*, it will carry us to the same Point. *Judah* is the only one who receiv'd *two* Blessings from his Father, viz. The *Promise* of the blessed Seed; and *a Portion* in the Land of *Canaan*, for the Maintenance of which a Government was established in his Family. This Prophecy promises a longer Continuance of the Government in the House of *Judah*, than other Tribes were to expect, and fixes a Term for the Duration of *Judah's Sceptre*. What could make this Distinction, but the peculiar Blessing given to *Judah*? And taking both his Blessings together, is it not natural to think, that the Continuance of his temporal Dominion and Inheritance is assured to him, to last till the Commencement of his better Promise? This is according to the Analogy of all the Prophecies from *Abraham's* Time; in all which the Land of *Canaan* is inseparably annexed

to the Promise of the blessed Seed. Whoever had the *one* Promise had the *other*; whoever was excluded from the *one* was excluded from the *other*. For this Reason *Ishmael* and *Esau* were sent out to plant other Countries, and had not a Foot allowed them in the Land of *Canaan*. Upon the Settlement made by *Jacob* in his Family, the Land of *Canaan* was divided, but *that Part* of it which attended upon the Promise of the blessed Seed, was, (as formerly) so united and annexed to that Promise, that it could not be entirely forfeited, and lost 'till the *blessed* Seed came. And this is the Reason why the Land of *Judah*, in distinction from the Land possessed by the other Tribes, is called by the Prophet *Isaiah*, the Land of *Immanuel*. *He shall pass through Judah, He shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the Neck, and the stretching out of his Wings shall fill the Breadth of thy Land, O Immanuel Isa. viii. 8.* What other Reason can be assigned for calling the Land of the House of *Judah*, the Land of *Immanuel*, rather than any other Part of the Land of *Canaan*,

naan, but this very Prophecy now under Consideration; which was indeed a Settlement of the Land of *Judab*, for a Term not to expire 'till *Immanuel* came?

Unto him shall the gathering of the People be. They who understand this Passage, as relating to the *Messiah*, have great Reason on their Side, as well from parallel Places of Scripture, as from the Authority of the most antient Interpreters. But yet some learned Men are otherwise minded, and think that these Words by natural Construction are to be referred to *Judab**; and considering that *Judab* is the Person here *principally* concerned, and whose Condition in the last Days is described; that *Shiloh* is not, in grammatical Construction, the principal Person in *this Passage*, but is mentioned only as the *Terminus ad quem*, the Term to which the *Sceptre* should continue with *Judab*; it seems more consonant to the Rules of Language to appropriate this Character to *Judab*, than to *Shiloh*. As to the main of the Prophecy, there is no Diffe-

* See Mr. Le Clerc's *Comment, and Note upon the Place.*

rence which ever way we take. According to the last of the two Interpretations, the Prophecy contains a most exact Description of the *State and Polity of Judah*, during the *Continuance* of his *Sceptre* after the *Sceptres* were removed from the other Tribes of *Israel*, that can be imagined. For the Remnant of all the Tribes after the *Assyrian* Captivity, were indeed gathered to *Judah*, and fell under the *Obedience* of that one Tribe; and the whole Nation from being styled the *People of Israel*, were thenceforwards styled, the *People of Judah*, or *Jews*. In this Sense, the Prophecy began to operate immediately upon the Division of the two Kingdoms. God promised *Solomon* to give one Tribe to his Son for his *Servant David's* sake, which is twice again repeated in the same Chapter. But in truth two Tribes, that of *Judah* and that of *Benjamin*, together with part of the Tribe of *Simeon*, and many Families, of the *Levites*, and of the other Tribes, who dwelt within the Borders of *Judah*, remained under the *Obedience* of the Kingdom of *Judah*; and no Reason can be

1 Kings
xi. 13.
Ibid. 32,
36.

given why this Body is called *one* Tribe, but only this, that the Tribe of *Judah* alone maintained its Power, and Constitution, the rest were all *gathered* to this Tribe, and sunk in it. This Account may be collected from the Text it self; 'tis said, that the *Children of Israel, which dwelt in the Cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.* And when an Account is given of *Rehoboam's* raising Forces to recover his Kingdom, 'tis said expressly, that he assembled *all the House of Judah with the Tribe of Benjamin.* I Kings xii. 17. And yet in the very Verse before 'tis said, *there was none that followed the House of David, but the Tribe of Judah only.* Ibid. x. 21. Yet still, when God sends a Message to those under the Obedience of *Rehoboam*, they are mentioned thus, *The House of Judah and Benjamin, and the Remnant of the People.* These are they who afterwards were comprehended under the Name of *Jews*; a Term introduced to signify the Tribe of *Judah*, and all the rest of the People united with and under that Tribe. From the Division of the Kingdoms, *Judah* was considered as making the Peo-

ple of one entire Kingdom, and gave name to all associated with them. We have a clear Account how this Matter stood in the second Book of *Chronicles*. *The Priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to Rehoboam, out of all their Coasts — And after them, out of all the Tribes of Israel, such as set their Hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their Fathers. So they strengthened the Kingdom of Judah.* All who came from other Tribes were considered but as an *additional Strength* to *Judah*, they preserved no distinct Polity of their own as belonging to other Tribes. From the Time of the *Assyrian Captivity*, the Case is very plain; there remained, without doubt, many private Families and Persons in the Land, who escaped in the general Confusion; but they subsisted not as Parts of distinct Tribes, but fell under the Dominion and Power of *Judah*; as appears in the Reformation made by King *Josiah*, which reach'd, not only to the Cities of *Judah*, but to all the *Countries that pertain'd to the Children of Israel*,

2 Chron.
xi. 13, 16,
17., xv. 9.

Israel, to the Cities of *Manasseh and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali*; Cities, in which the Kings of *Judah* had no ^{2 Chron. xxxiv. 6, 33.} Influence or Authority, so long as the separate Kingdom of *Israel* subsisted. After the Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity, we hear of little else but *Jews*, tho' we know, the *Benjamites* were join'd with them; and the Decree of *Cyrus* being a general Permission for the Return of all the Tribes, many Families of other Tribes return'd to their own Country: But all these were *gathered to Judah*, and be- ^{1 Chron. ix. 3.} came one People. And in this State and Condition Things continu'd till the Coming of *Christ*, and the last Destruction of ^{Luke ii. 36.} the Nation by the *Roman* Power. ^{Acts xxvi. 7.}

If we consider how the Event corresponds to this Interpretation of the Prophecy in *other Respects*, we shall find that from the Death of *Jacob*, there was a Government settled in the several Tribes, with respect to their own distinct People; that the Heads of Tribes together did, by common Consent, administer the Affairs of the People in general. This appears during the Abode of the Children

of *Israel* in *Egypt*; for *Moses* and *Aaron* were sent to the *Elders of the People**; these Elders were *Heads of Houses*, as appears soon after in the History†, and *Rulers of the Congregation*‡. That the People were form'd into Tribes in *Egypt* is plain; because they are mention'd in that Capacity as soon as they got into the Wilderness, without any new Order or Constitution to make them so. The Stones of the Priest's Breast-plate were twelve by the Appointment of God, to answer to the Number, and to bear the

Levit.

Numb. i.
3.

* Exod. iii. 16. iv. 29. Τὴν γερουσίαν τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ. The Senate of the Children of *Israel*. LXX. *Concilium filiorum Israel*. Vulg. Exod. xii. 3.

† Exod. vi. 14. Ἀρχηβοὶ οἴκων πατριῶν αὐτῶν LXX. Principes domorum per familias suas. Vulg.

‡ Exod. xvi. 22. Ἀρχεῖτες τῆ συναγωγῆς. LXX.

forth

forth in these Words, *These were the renowned of the Congregation, Princes of the Tribes of their Fathers, Heads of Thousands in Israel.* ibid. §. 16.

Since then there were *Elders*, and *Heads of Houses* in *Egypt*, who acted with Authority for the People, and to whom, therefore, the Message of God by *Moses* and *Aaron* was directed: Since the Distinction of Tribes appears plainly as soon as the People came out of *Egypt*, and Princes of the People appear transacting the Affairs of their People; and no Appointment or Constitution to settle these Tribes appears from the Time of *Jacob*: and since there is no mention of any Tribe in *Israel*, until *Jacob's* Appointment of them just before his Death: It is manifest, that this Constitution owes its Rise to *Jacob's* Appointment, and took place from that Time.

From this Time to the Time of the Captivity of *Babylon*, there is no Suspicion that the Tribe of *Judah* wanted Rulers and Princes within themselves: The Power of the Heads of Tribes subsisted under the Government of the

Kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, and was so considerable, that nothing of Moment was done without their Advice and Consent *.

The ten Tribes, which constituted the Kingdom of *Israel*, were carried into Captivity by *Salmaneser* about seven hundred Years before *Christ*; and this put an End to the Being of these Tribes; they never recovered again, or appeared as a People from that Time to this. And here the Completion of the Prophecy relating to the *Continuation* of *Judah's Sceptre*, after the Removal of the others, has its Commencement.

The Division of the Kingdom prepar'd the Way for the Completion of this Prophecy. Had all the Tribes continu'd under one Head, they would probably have all undergone the same Fate; but being

* Hi Tribuum Principes Reipublicæ Hebraicæ erant Megistanes, & Capita, & totius Populi Magistratui, sive Index esset sive Rex, aderant, & cum illo sedentes partim consilia inibant, partim jus reddebant. Quinetiam simul cum summo Reipublicæ Capite, Judice, aut Rege, se obligabant, si quid esset jurejurando publico faciendum. *Menoch. de Rep. Heb. Lib. 1. cap. 6.*

divided in Interest, and having different Kings, and consequently not being concern'd together in Matters of Peace and War, their Fortunes proved very different; for the *Assyrian* Captivity was Ruin to the ten Tribes, but the *Babylonish* Captivity was only a seventy Years Punishment to *Judah*.

The seventy Years of the *Babylonish* Captivity, is the only Period of Time that can create any Difficulty upon this Scheme. But if we consider that the *Jews* were not carried to *Babylon* to be *Slaves*, but were transplanted as a *Colony*, to people the great, and newly enlarged, City of *Babylon**; that they are commanded therefore by the Prophet, to *build*^{Jer. xxix. 5, 7.} *Houses*, and *plant Gardens*; and to *seek the Peace of the City*, in which they were *Captives*; Circumstances, which prove them not to have been *Slaves* in *Babylon*: That upon the Expiration of the seventy Years, many of them were so well settled in Ease and Plenty, that they refus'd to return to their own Country again: If

* See Dr. *Prideaux's* Connexion of the Old and New Testament, Part I. B. 2. p. 96. 8vo Edit.

we consider further, that the *Jews* lived at *Babylon* as a distinct People, and were govern'd in their own Affairs by their own Rulers and Elders, appointed Feasts and Fasts, and ordered all other Matters relating to their *own* civil and ecclesiastical Affairs within themselves†; it will take off the Weight of this Difficulty, and shew us, that the *Power* and *Sceptre* of *Judah*, relative to the Being and Subsistence of the Tribe, were not removed during this Captivity. And indeed, what Reason is there to think, that this Constitution was disturb'd by the transplanting the People to *Babylon*, which began under the Power of the Kings of *Egypt*, and subsisted with all the Forms and Changes of Government, which the Peo-

† *The Decree for destroying the Jews, in Apocryphal Esther, is founded in this, That they had Laws contrary to all Nations, and continually despised the Commandments of the King c. xiii. §. 4. And when the Decree is reversed, they are said to live by most just Laws, c. xvi. §. 15. Esther, in her Prayer for the People, says, O Lord, give not thy Sceptre unto them that be nothing, and let them not laugh at our Fall, c. xiv. 11. And if the Writer of the History of Susanna knew any Thing of the State of the Jews in Babylon, 'tis plain they had Rulers and Judges of their own, who executed their Laws even in capital Causes, §. 41. & 62.*

ple of *Israel* underwent, from their coming out of the *Egyptian* Bondage, to their going into the Captivity of *Babylon*; sure we are, from the Accounts preserv'd in the Books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, that the Tribes of *Judah* and *Benjamin* subsisted as such, during the Captivity, and preserved very regular Accounts of their Genealogies: That they had likewise their *Chiefs* and *Elders*, who decided their Affairs, there is no doubt; they are mention'd in *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, as the Persons managing the great Affairs of the Return, and re-establishing the Service of God in *Jerusalem*: That they came back to their own Country as a *People* and *Nation* govern'd by their own Laws, is evident from the Complaint sent against them to *Artaxerxes*, in which they make too great a Figure, and are represented too considerable to be thought a Set of mere Slaves, subjected entirely to a foreign Yoke, without Law or Government of their own. 'Tis true, that from the Time of the Captivity, the *Jews* were never so free a People again, as they had been formerly; they liv'd under the

Sub-

Ezra i. 5.

ii. 68.

iii. 12.

viii. 1.

x. 1.

x. 14.

Nehem.

ii. 16.

iv. 14. 15.

vi. 17.

Ezra iv.

11.

Subjection of the *Persian* Monarch, and under the Empire of the *Greeks* and *Romans* to their last Destruction; but still they liv'd as a *distinct People*, govern'd by their own Law*: And the Authority of the *Persian* and other Kings over 'em, destroy'd not the Rule and Authority of *Judah*, which subsisted with it; as it had, in its first Commencement, subsisted under the Kings of *Egypt*, and oftentimes under Judges and Kings of their own. How the Case stood in the Time of the *Hasmonean* Princes, may be collected from several Passages of the *Maccabees*; but especially from the Preambles of publick Leagues made by, and with the *Jews*. Historians oftentimes speak loosely, but authentick publick Acts preserve Forms, and shew in what Hands the Government resides. The Ambassadors sent from *Jerusalem* to *Rome*, speak in the Name of *Judas Maccabeus* and his Brethren, and the *People of the Jews*. The League which followed upon this Application

1 Mac.
viii. 20.

* Artaxerxes's Commission to Ezra is express, that he should appoint such Magistrates and Judges, as know the Laws of thy God.

to Rome is styl'd, *A Covenant with the People of the Jews*. When the League ^{ibid.} was made with the *Lacedæmonians*, the ^{v. 29. xii. 3. xv. 17.} publick Letter was in the following Style, *Jonathan the High-priest and the Elders of the Nation and the Princes, and the other People of the Jews*. When Simon ^{ibid.} was their Governour, his Authority was ^{xii. 6, 14, 20.} convey'd to him, *in the Congregation of the Princes and the People, and Rulers of the Nation, and Elders of the Country*. These are elsewhe call'd, *the Council*, ^{xiv. 28.} and the *rest of the Jews*; and the *People* ^{2 Mac. xi. 27.} *of the Jews*. These Instances are suf- ^{ibid. v. 34.} ficient to shew, that the Polity of the *Jews*, as a distinct People, under Heads and Rulers of their own, subsisted in this Period, and was not extinguish'd by the Power of the *Hasmonean* Princes.

That things continued in this State to the very death of *Christ*, may be evinced from many Passages in the Gospel; some I shall produce and close this Article.

When our Saviour tells the *Jews*, *the* ^{John viii. 32.} *Truth shall make you free*, they reply, ^{33.} *We are Abraham's Children, and were never in Bondage to any Man*. Surely, they

they had not forgot their Captivity in *Babylon*, much less could they be ignorant of the Power of the *Romans* over them at that time, and yet you see they account themselves free; and so they were; for they lived by their own Laws, and executed Judgment among themselves. This is plain from the Case of the Woman taken in Adultery; *Moses in the Law*, say the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, *commanded us that such should be stoned, but what sayest thou?* When our Saviour foretels his disciples that they should be *delivered up to Councils*, and *scourged in Synagogues*, he shews at the same time what Power and Authority were exercised in the Councils and Synagogues of the *Jews*: When *Pilate*, willing to be deliver'd of *Jesus*, says to the *Jews*, *Take ye him and crucify him*, and again, *Take ye him and judge him according to your own Law*; he also shews, that the *Jews* lived under their own Law, and had the Exercise of judicial Authority among themselves*. This was the

John
viii. 5.

Mat. x.
17.

John xix.
6.

John
xviii. 31.

* See this prov'd at large by *Waggenjeil. Car Lip. Con. pag. 299. &c.*

Condition of things at the death of *Christ*.

By this Deduction it appears evidently, That the *Sceptre* placed in the Hand of *Judah*, by his Father *Jacob* just before his Death, continued in his Posterity till the very death of *Christ*. From that time all things began to work towards the Destruction of the *Jewish* Polity, and within a few Years, their City, Temple, and Government were utterly ruined; and the *Jews*, not carried into a gentle Captivity, to enjoy their Law, and live as a distinct People in a foreign Country, but they were sold like Beasts in a Market, and became Slaves in the strictest Sense; and from that Day to this have had neither *Prince* nor *Lawgiver* among them. Nor will they ever be able, after all their Pretences, to shew any signs or marks of the *Sceptre* among them, till they discover the unknown Country, *where never Mankind dwelt*, and where the Apocryphal *Esdras* has placed their Brethren of the ten Tribes. 2 Esd.
xiii. 41.

Before I take leave of this Subject, it is necessary to observe, That this Interpretation

Deut. 8
xxxiii. 7.

Numb. i.
and xxvi.

tation of the Prophecy of *Jacob* relating to *Judah*, is very much confirmed by another Prophecy given by *Moses*, not long before his Death. In the xxxiii. Chap. of *Deut.* *Moses* blesses the Tribes; and as there are many Passages in this last Benediction of *Moses*, which correspond to the Blessings pronounced by *Jacob*, so particularly, the Blessing of *Judah* by *Moses* seems to relate to the last State of that Tribe and the continuance of the Sceptre of *Judah*, after the Dispersion of the other Tribes. The Words of *Moses* are these; *Hear, Lord the Voice of Judah, and bring him unto his People: Let his Hands be sufficient for him, and be thou an help to him from his Enemies.* This Benediction cannot relate to the time when it was given, for then *Judah's* Hand were very sufficient for him, this Tribe being by much the greatest of the twelve Tribes, as appears by two different Accounts of the Forces of *Israel* in the Book of *Numbers*; and there was more Reason to put up this Petition for several other Tribes, than for *Judah*. Besides, what is the meaning of *bringing*

ing Judah to his People? How were he and his People at this time separated? What means likewise the other part of the Petition? *Be thou an Help to him from his Enemies.* This Petition supposes a State of Distress; yet what Distress was *Judah* in at this time, at least what greater Distress than the other Tribes? The antient *Targums*, and some old Versions, understand the first Petition of bringing *Judah back to his People*, to be only a Request, in his behalf, for safe return from the Day of Battle; but was there not the same Reason for the same Petition in behalf of every Tribe? Nay how much better would it have suited *Reuben, Gad*, and the half Tribe of *Manasseh*, who left their People and their Settlements on the other side of *Jordan*, and passed over the River in the very Front of the Battle to assist their Brethren. Josh. iv. 12.

But if you refer *this* Prophecy to the Prophecy of *Jacob*, and to the continuance of the *Sceptre* of *Judah* after the Destruction of the other Tribes, every Expression is natural and proper, and suited to the Occasion. Do but suppose *Moses* in the Spirit of Prophecy, to have a

Sight of the State of Affairs when all the People were in Captivity, and you will see how this *prophetick Prayer* answers to that State. All the Tribes were in Captivity, the ten Tribes in *Assyria*, and *Judah* in *Babylon*; but it was implied in *Jacob's Prophecy*, that *Judah* should *retain the Sceptre*, and return again; for *Judah* only, therefore, does *Moses* pray, that *he* may *come to his People again*. *Jacob* had foretold that, at this time, the *gathering of the People should be to Judah*; that he should be all in all, the only Head of all the Remnant of *Israel*; these People destined to be gathered to *Judah*, were now dispersed in all Parts of the East, and were no People, could be no People till the Return of *Judah*; at which Return many of all the Tribes were to join themselves to *Judah*, and with him to form one People: How properly then does *Moses* pray, that *Judah* might return to his People.

Let his Hands be sufficient for him: Good Reason was there for this Petition, for scarcely were his Hands sufficient at the Return from *Babylon*. The Tribe of *Judah* in *Moses* his Time consisted of

76500, reckoning only those of twenty Years old and upward. But upon the return from *Babylon*, *Judah* with *Benjamin*, the *Levites*, and the *Remnant* of *Israel* made only 42360, and in so weak a State they were, that *Sanballat*, in great Scorn said, *what do these feeble Jews?* And the People themselves complain as being not sufficient to go thro' the Toil of building the Wall; and *Judah* said, *the strength of the bearers of Burdens is decayed, and there is much Rubbish, so that we are not able to build the Wall.*

Be thou an Help to him from his Enemies. The Books *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* are convincing Proofs of the great Difficulties and Oppositions which the *Jews* found in setting up their Temple and City; once their Enemies had so prevailed, that Orders came from the Court of *Persia* to stop all their Proceedings; and even at last, when *Nehemiah* came to their Assistance with a new Commission from *Artaxerxes*, they were so beset with Enemies, that the Men employed in building the Wall, *every one with one of*

Neh. iv.
87.

his Hands wrought in the Work, and with the other Hand held a Weapon.

Lay these two Prophecies now together; *Jacob* foretels that *Judah's Sceptre* should continue till *Shiloh* came; which is in effect foretelling that the *Sceptres* of the other Tribes should not continue so long: *Moses* in the Spirit of Prophecy sees the Desolation of *all the Tribes*; he sees the Tribes of the Kingdom of *Israel* carried away by the *A Assyrians*, the People of *Judah* by the *Babylonians*; he sees that *Judah* should again return, *weak, harassed*, and scarcely able to maintain himself in his own Country; for them therefore he conceives this prophetick Prayer: *Hear, Lord, the Voice of Judah, and bring him unto his People: Let his Hands be sufficient for him, and be thou an help to him from his Enemies.*

You'll say, perhaps, why did not *Jacob* foretel also the Continuance of the *Sceptre* of *Benjamin*, for the Tribe of *Benjamin* run the same Fortune with that of *Judah*; they went together into Captivity, they returned home together, and were both in Being when *Shiloh* came? In answer to this, I have two things to offer.

First,

First, it has already appeared that from the Division of the Kingdoms after the Death of *Solomon*, the Tribe of *Benjamin*, and the Remnant of *Israel*, that is part of all the other Tribes adhered to *Judab*, and formed one People under *Judab* as their Head; and this was consonant unto *Jacob's* Prophecy, *Unto him shall the gathering of the People be.*

Secondly, Though the Continuance of the *Sceptre* of *Benjamin* is not foretold (for the *Sceptre* was to be *Judab's*) yet the Continuance of the Tribe or People of *Benjamin* is distinctly foretold both by *Jacob* and by *Moses*. The Blessing of *Benjamin* as delivered by *Jacob* is thus, *Benjamin shall ravine as a Wolf: In the Morning he shall devour the Prey, and at Night he shall divide the Spoil: As delivered by Moses* it is thus, *Of Benjamin he said, the Beloved of the Lord shall dwell in Safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the Day long, and he shall dwell between his Shoulders.* When *Jacob* professes to declare what shall befall his Sons in the last Times, is it hard to say what must be understood by the *Morning* and *Night* in *Jacob's* Prophecy

Prophecy concerning *Benjamin*? The *natural Morning* and *Night* cannot possibly be understood here; and what other *Morning* and *Night* can you suppose intended, but the *Morning* and the *Night* of the *Jewish State* *? For this State is the Subject of all *Jacob's* Prophecy from one End to the other; consequently it is here foretold of *Benjamin*, that he should continue to the very last Times of the *Jewish State*. And this Interpretation is confirmed by *Moses* his Prophecy, for the Prophecy of *Moses* is in Truth an Exposition of *Jacob's* Prophecy. *Benjamin*, says *Moses*, *shall dwell in Safety; The Lord shall cover him ALL THE DAY LONG, he shall dwell between his Shoulders*. What is this, *all the Day long*? You see how *Benjamin* is distinguished; he is to *dwell in Safety*, under the *Cover* of the *Lord*, and *between his Shoulders all the Day long*. Does not this import a Promise of a *longer Continuance* to *Benjamin*, than to the other Tribes? And was it not most exactly fulfilled?

* Thus some Jewish Interpreters referred to by Bochart, understood the Expression. Manè, id est primis Israelitici regni temporibus—Sub vesperam, id est post Captivitatis Babylonice tempora. Hieron. cap. 10. pag. 828

The learned *Bochart*, upon very slight Grounds supposes an Inversion in the Order of the Words in *Jacob's* Prophecy concerning *Benjamin*; and by the *Morning and the Night*, he understands the *Night and Morning*; so that the Time described, is, in his Sense, the *whole Night*, and not the *whole Day*. All this is built upon the Property of the *Wolf*, to which *Benjamin* is compared: 'Tis a *Night Wolf*, says *Bochart*, which catches the Prey in the Night, and feeds on it in the Morning. But I very much question whether the Style of the Scripture will bear the Test of such Classick Nicety and Exactness. And tho' this Imagination has been followed by considerable Commentators; yet since *Moses*, in his own Prophecy on *Benjamin*, has expounded *this Morning and Night*, by *all the Day long*, there is no room to make any further question about it.

I have nothing more to add, but to acquaint the Reader that the Interpretation of *Jacob's* Prophecy, now advanced is not a mere Invention of my own. It is, as to the main Point, the same with that, which is the *fourth* in *Huetius*, and
by

by him rejected; but for such Reasons as have been fully obviated in this Account. 'Tis the same, which *Junius* and *Tremellius*, and our own learned Countryman *Ainsworth*, espoused; and which not many Years ago was revived and improved by Mr. *Foncourt*. This last mentioned Gentleman published several Letters upon obscure Passages of Scripture, and among the rest one upon the *Sceptre of Judah*, which are very well worth the reading. As to the Letter upon the *Sceptre of Judah*, if I had thought nothing wanting in it to clear this Prophecy, I wou'd not have troubled the World with this Dissertation. But whether I have succeeded better in this Attempt, than those, who have gone before me in the same Argument, belongs not to me to judge,

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